THE NEW YORK LEDGER
DEVOTED CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS AND COMMERCE
VOL. XVI. R. BONNER, { EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR, NO. 40 PARK ROW. NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 2, 1861. TERMS, { $2 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 48.

[ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1861 BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK.]

THE BEAUTIFUL MUST COME AGAIN

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I.

Thy brow is bent, thine eye is dim;
And low, and sad thy morning hymn
As dirges sung in Autumn-bowers,
By winds above the withered flowers—
Thy morning hymn whose thrilling tone
Once seemed from Joy's own trumpet blown,
While not a sinlge cloud nor hearse
Went shadowing the universe:
Yet sunnier be thy morning strain—
The BEAUTIFUL *must* come again!

II.

Ah, know that thou but walkest now,
With darkened eye and solemn brow,
Through that wild wilderness, alas!
Where *highest* ones must sometimes pass,
Grim doubt upon their souls—a night
Lit only with a ghostly light,
A mocking of that seraph-blaze
That once illumed Creation's ways:
Yet sunnier be thy morning strain—
The BEAUTIFUL *must* come again!

◆

THE MUTE SINGER.*

BY ANNA CORA RITCHIE.

CHAPTER IV.

LAUNCHED!

Sylvie had never beheld Maitre Beaujeu more nervously irritable than on the morning of the eventful day when her powers were to be gauged before the tribunal of public taste. Now, he declared that she sang as though her heart were ice and her voice frosty air; anon he complained that she exaggerated, she was too florid, too fiery, too dramatic. When she became embarrassed by these unusual criticisms, he charged her with affectation and wounded vanity. Heretofore in his instructions he had never alluded to the absence or presence of emotion, but had developed her magnificent voice and perfected her fine ear, as though he ignored that they were instruments for the soul's melodious expression. She had been wholly unconscious of the depth of feeling that often found utterance upon her lips. Its manifestation was unpremeditated and untutored. Maitre Beaujeu's pitiless chiding now inspired her with a strong dread that he had over-rated her talents, and her heart sank until she grew deadly sick, and then it seemed to mount into her throat and stifle the swelling notes. This was the first time that her noble organ had been impaired by the least approach to huskiness.

Maitre Beaujeu, in almost frantic amazement, ceased playing, to dive into his snuff box, and, having nearly impeded his respiration with its stimulating contents, he sought comfort in torturing his moustache with tugs which threatened its total uprooting. He found further relief in roundly scolding Sylvie for her lack of composure, without once suspecting that he himself had destroyed her mental equilibrium.

The young girl made no reply, but her whole frame shook with repressed agitation.

"Premonitory symptoms of hysterics, as I live! I know the signs, and foresee what's coming!" cried the teacher, scanning her with indignant glances. "If we are to be indulged with an hysterical farce to-night, I'm ruined! that's all!" and he doggedly closed the piano, and rose from his seat.

Sylvie strove in vain to choke down a sob.

Maitre Beaujeu responded to it with a fierce growl, and ordered her to sing no more that day, and not to weary herself with exertion of any kind, yet not to lie down for fear of clogging her voice, and not to eat except very sparingly—then hurried out of the room. The two last were most superfluous commands, she was a stranger to the luxurious habit of reposing when the sun was up, and the frugal fare of poverty was not likely to pamper her appetite.

The white dress was completed some hours before it was needed. Madame de la Roche sat beside the bed where it lay, smoothing out the folds, and mourning over the recollections it awakened, of her happy maidenhood, when she had worn just such attire; while Ursule constantly interrupted her reminiscences by suggestions for the improvement of Sylvie's severely simple toilette.

"A little jewelry is really indispensable; it will keep people from suspecting that she is so *very* poor; have you no ornaments, no trinkets?"

As may be imagined, the answer was in the negative.

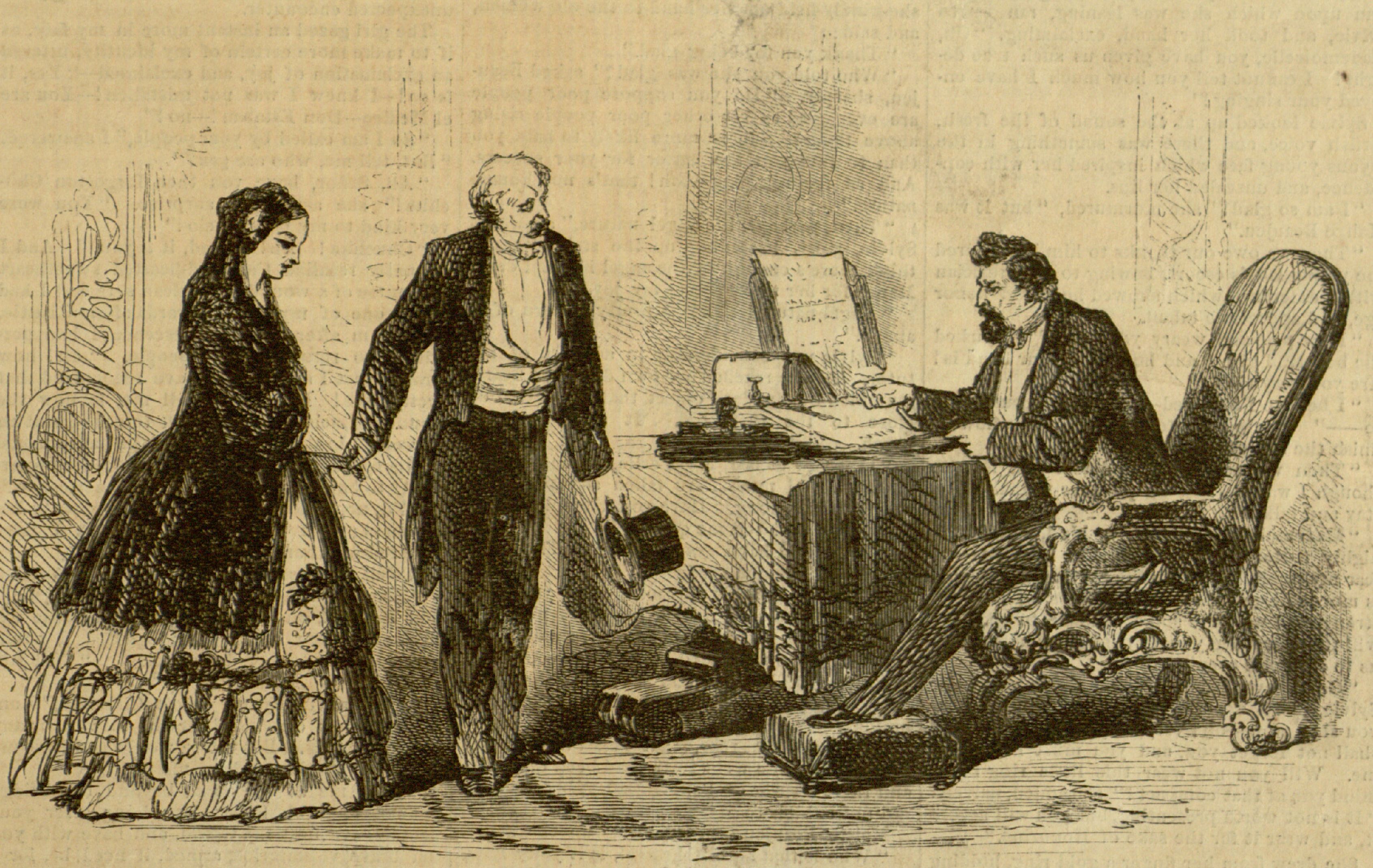
"And nothing to wear in your hair, Sylvie? Something bright might improve your looks."

"I fear not," replied Sylvie, quietly; "and I would rather not try the experiment. Maitre Beaujeu would tell you that my looks are a hopeless case; and, to-day, my heart is hardly full enough of hope to contradict them."

The kind dress-maker was not satisfied. She went to her own apartment and hunted over all the humble treasures she had hoarded up for years. By and by, she returned with a *cache-peigne*, and breast knot of scarlet ribbons, which she had herself worn, upon festive occasions, long, long ago—before the snow of life's winter fell on her hair, and the chill of disappointment on her heart. She had also brought a large cameo brooch, the setting of very doubtful gold, and the cutting very undoubtedly execrable. Also a huge buckle, and a pair of very barbarous-looking gold hoops for the ears, which she declared would give great character to Sylvie's face. Sylvie's ears had been pierced in her childhood, but her juvenile ear-rings of bright, red coral, had long since been converted into bread.

Sylvie was very loath to wound her warm-hearted friend, but good taste prompted her to reject the grotesque looking additions to her attire.

Ursule next insisted upon displaying her skill as hair-dresser, and what combing, and brushing, and braiding Sylvie's abundant tresses underwent! An hour was consumed in the task—then the fiery *cache peigne* was fastened over those shining braids; and Ursule declared that her labors had produced a marvellous result! Sylvie glanced in the small mirror which Ursule triumphantly held up before her, and could not help admitting that her *coiffeuse* spoke the exact truth, the effect of her handiwork was so "*marvellous*" that the young girl hardly recognized her own countenance; the mirror seemed mockingly to reflect some ludicrous caricature of the face she had been accustomed to see. When she involuntarily raised her hand to remove the hideous red bows, which covered not her hair only, but half her head, Ursule pleaded so hard that they might remain undisturbed, that Sylvie hesitated, and, rather than cause her zealous friend mortification, came very near relenting. Just then a timid knock called Madame de la Roche to the door. The hunchback stood without.



SYLVIE'S INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT MAESTRO.

"They say Mademoiselle Sylvie is going to sing at the Count Castellane's to-night: she'll want flowers; all the grand ladies wear flowers. Ninette spared me these. Beg Mademoiselle Sylvie to wear them."

He handed the mother a small bunch of June roses, and hastened away.

The roses were just what Sylvie would have desired, had she been accustomed to wish for anything that seemed unattainable. The flaming *cache peigne* was quickly discarded. The delicate-hued roses, with their vivid green leaves, tastefully disposed among her glossy, dark hair, gave to the arrangement of her head a picturesque effect, that wonderfully improved her countenance.

The white muslin dress fitted admirably. Sylvie's neck and arms lacked the beauty of roundness, but the artful dressmaker had only disclosed them beneath a transparent covering, which concealed their thinness, without hiding the graceful fall of the shoulders, and the gentle curve of the youthful bust.

Ursule took up the mammoth brooch, with the evident hope of fastening it in Sylvie's bosom; but the latter smilingly frustrated her intention by placing one of the June roses in her breast. The brooch was relinquished, and the huge buckle proffered; but Sylvie mildly set it aside, and arranged her white sash very neatly with a few unseen pins. The earrings alone remained, and Ursule so pertinaciously urged their adoption, that Sylvie found it difficult to defend herself from being forced to assume the barbarous appendages.

In spite of her predilection for finery, and her discomfiture at the rejection of her precious gew-gaws, when Ursule paused to contemplate the young singer, apparelled in virginal, white raiment, with the June roses in her hair and on her bosom, she frankly acknowledged that any ornament would have destroyed the maidenly simplicity—the striking spirituality—of her appearance.

The hour at which Maitre Beaujeu had promised to call for his pupil was approaching. The Count Castellane resided in the Faubourg St. Honoré, at some distance from the lodgings of the debutante and her master; but there was no money left for the hire of a *fiacre*, and they were obliged to walk.

"What is Sylvie to wear over her dress? We have nothing, positively nothing!" exclaimed the mother. "This faded mantle of hers will never do, never! And I have only a worn-out, grey shawl. What *is* she to wear? And on her head, too! She has nothing but her old straw bonnet, and that is not only too shabby, but it would crush those flowers, and disarrange her hair."

Madame de la Roche had discovered a new difficulty, and it really seemed as though, through habit, she seized with avidity upon each fresh obstacle. Before she had ceased speaking, Ursule was out of the room.

In a few moments she re-appeared, with a somewhat rusty, black silk mantilla on her arm. "There! there's something quite respectable. I've worn it these ten years, on Sundays and holidays, but it has always been in fashion, and no one can turn up their noses at black silk—it's always genteel."

"But her head—what for her head?" cried the mother.

"Well, for her head I do not think I can arrange quite as nicely; we have to manage about that. I have no sort of evening head-gear, for I don't go out at night; I have no one to accompany me," she added, with a little sigh. "A hat is out of the question, or I might lend her my green silk bonnet, with the scarlet poppies; but it would not do; so I've brought this for a substitute, and we must make it answer."

As she spoke, she flung over Sylvie's head, and fastened lightly under her chin, a very old black veil, of imitation lace, carefully darned here and there, yet not without rents, which there was no time to repair.

"There! it's charming! Quite Spanish in its effect, I declare! And it won't press upon the flowers. I assure you it don't look at all out of the way. In some countries veils are always worn in the streets. To be sure, people don't fasten them on just in this style, but what does that signify?"

Maitre Beaujeu now made his appearance, looking more quaint than ever in the full dress suit which he had preserved for so many years, that it had a come-out-of-the-ark sort of cut and air.

"What? you're ready, young one? That's right—I like punctuality. I hope we are to have no hysterics? There! don't begin to look frightened; we won't talk about such stuff. We must be off, for it is a long walk, and if you are hurried or flurried to-night, your voice will suffer."

"Can you not wait a moment or two, to give her father a chance of seeing her?" besought Madame de la Roche. "He said he would be home in time, but he had some copying engaged for to-day, and I suppose he could not get through so early as he intended."

The very possibility of Monsieur de la Roche's appearance was enough to speed Maitre Béaujeu.

"No, no, we are going this instant!" And he snatched Sylvie's hand away from Ursule, who was fastening her glove. "Let's be off! and carry that nightingale safely in your throat, or you and I will both be undone to-night."

"Oh, don't mention it!" sighed Madame de la Roche, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "It's just what I expect."

"Then, begging your pardon, you're a—a—I won't say what you are!" answered Beaujeu, bluntly. "Don't you suppose I know what I'm about? Do you imagine I would risk *my own* reputation, and with such a pompous fellow as Le Grand? Come, let's be off before I get into a passion."

How those words, rude as they were, consoled and encouraged Sylvie, who had been struggling all day with her doubts! She embraced her mother tenderly, saying—

"All will be well with me, mother; have no fear; my voice was not given me for nothing, and——"

"Is this sermon going to end soon?" shouted the impatient old man. "When did you turn preacher, scarecrow? Your voice was not designed for the pulpit, but the choir."

Sylvie turned to Ursule, murmured her thanks, kissed her, and followed her master.

In quitting the room he nearly came in contact with Mathieu, who was watching at the door. Beaujeu lifted his hand to strike the boy, but Sylvie caught the upraised arm.

"Don't! don't—I wasn't doing anything!" cried Mathieu. "I only wanted to see Ma'm'selle Sylvie as she passed, and to know if she wore my roses."

"Yes, Mathieu, yes; I have them in my hair, and on my bosom." She hastily lifted her veil as she spoke, and threw back the old black mantilla, that he might see the flowers.

His look of beaming delight made her heart glow, and she thought, "What a simple thing can give pleasure to the very poor, very humble, very pleasureless! It is almost worth while being poor, to need so little to make one happy!"

The walk to the hotel of the Count Castellane was long, and Maitre Beaujeu preserved silence which Sylvie felt no disposition to break. At any other time she might have enjoyed the sight of the gaily illuminated streets, and the brilliantly lighted shop-windows, which she seldom beheld, but now she saw nothing save the clear blue sky, and the stars, above her—thought of nothing but high purposes and heavenly aid.

They passed through a spacious court-yard, and the door of the stately mansion was quickly thrown open.

"Monsieur Le Grand, is he here? Has he come yet?" inquired Beaujeu of a domestic.

"I believe so, Monsieur."

"Have the goodness to show me to him."

The servant led the way to the library. By a table, poring over some leaves of music, sat a pompous-looking old man, attired in the height of the fashion. His dyed beard and hair lent no counterfeited youth to his deeply-furrowed face. He turned as the door opened. His air was unmistakably consequential and patronizing.

"Ah! Beaujeu, my friend, is that you? Glad you're early!" he exclaimed, in a condescending tone. "Is this the young person you thought competent to take the place of Mademoiselle Belle-Chasse, and fill that unfortunate hiatus by singing with Lablache?"

He scrutinized poor Sylvie with a mistrustful expression, which increased the nervous trepidation from which she was already suffering; then whispered, still glancing doubtfully at her, "Do you think she is *really equal* to the Semiramide?"

"Monsieur Le Grand," answered Beaujeu, with a dignity which Sylvie had never before seen him assume, "I am no pretender—I am an artist as you are yourself. I have never had your opportunities, or met with your success—all the worse for me; but I have *some reputation* to lose, and not having quite as much to spare as you have, my loss would be all the heavier if I committed a *faux pas*. I should not have recommended my pupil, Mademoiselle Sylvie de la Roche, were I not quite certain of her powers."

Sylvie began to wish that he had been less confident, or that he would speak with less certainty, and promise less, for cold shudders ran through her frame; she felt as though her voice were stifled, her blood frozen, and as if all her limbs had suddenly lost their sinews.

She could hardly help exclaiming, "Oh! my master, you have over-rated me! I shall never be able to sing before an audience, especially if the people resemble this gentleman."

She turned to Beaujeu with the words surging up to her lips. One look revealed that he only preserved his calmness through a mighty effort; that his composure and his apparent faith in her success were assumed. The hand in which he held his old horn box shook, and scattered its contents; he blew his nose violently, either to appear at his ease or to conceal his countenance; and when that prolonged process was over, how the poor moustache was twirled and twisted and martyrized! Sylvie saw that he was, in reality, fearful of failure. Her downcast eyes rested on her snowy dress, and she thought of the sacrificed violin.

"I beg pardon, I did not mean to offend," said Le Grand, coldly. "I referred only to the extreme youth of the young lady. Her appearance made me question——"

Maitre Beaujeau interrupted him; "Monsieur, I did not tell you that her appearance was prepossessing. Did you ever see the plumage of a nightingale? Parrots and peacocks have gaudy feathers; but the nightingale carries divine music beneath a rusty coat of brown."

The performers of both sexes now began to pour in. Monsieur Le Grand saluted each in turn in the most courteous manner.

The ladies were robed in ball costume, and there was a lavish display of satins, brocades, embroidered tulle, flashing diamonds, artificial flowers, floating feathers and all the accessories of the most elaborate toilettes. Sylvie's white muslin and June roses looked strangely insignificant and out of place beside their gorgeous attire.

As they threw off their rich mantles they cast upon her glances of disdainful surprise, and whispered to each other. The men looked at her hardly less rudely, turning away with a shrug which said, "she's no beauty!"

Maitre Beaujeau perceiving how Sylvie shook, almost forced her into a seat, and stood beside her chair as though to shield her from the impertinence to which she was exposed.

Last of all entered Lablache. Monsieur Le Grand immediately presented him to Sylvie and her instructor. The latter was quite prepared for some expression of disapprobation when the distinguished basso beheld the lowly looking substitute who had been chosen to fill the place of Madamoiselle Belle-Chasse; but Lablache hardly bestowed a glance upon Sylvie. It was a matter of very little importance to him in what manner she executed her share of the music; he regarded her merely as a necessary auxiliary to enable him to display his wonderful powers in a duet which had been ordered by a member of the Royal family, as an express compliment to himself.

The tuning and trying of instruments filled up a long interval. At last Monsieur Le Grand, who had left the room, returned, and said, with emphasis:

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, if you are all ready, have the goodness to accompany me."

Sylvie, as she perceived the general movement, rose from her chair, but the next instant sank down again. For a moment the lids dropped heavily over her eyes, and her naturally sallow complexion grew almost livid.

Maitre Beaujeu seized her arm and whispered, "Do you intend to disgrace me before all these people? For the love of Heaven rouse yourself! You CAN if you WILL—I say you *must*—you *shall!*"

She slowly opened her eyes and regarded him with a vacant stare, as though she hardly comprehended his words.

"Sylvie, don't you hear me? Why don't you answer? See, they have all gone, and we shall be missed."

The room was by this time empty.

Maitre Beaujeu glanced over the programme he held in his hand, and whispered, "Courage! child, courage! your turn does not come for some time. You are fully equal to the occasion if you will only collect yourself. Courage, dear child!"

How kindly his voice sounded! Silvie could not recognize the tone; and gentle words always had such power over her! They now seemed to communicate strength, to renew vitality, to quicken and exalt all her faculties. Nothing could have restored her more effectually than words of tenderness, to which she was so little accustomed. She looked up and smiled gratefully, though very feebly; then rose once more, took the musician's proffered arm, and allowed him to almost carry her whither he would.

As they passed through the crowded hall, Beaujeu fortunately caught sight of Monsieur Le Grand's figure, and followed him at a distance, until they reached the *salon* which had been arranged for the performers. Upon a dais, raised at one end of the apartment, stood various musical instruments, and a number of velvet-covered arm-chairs. As each performer mounted the platform, Maitre Le Grand pointed out his or her place. Sylvie and her tutor he located in the least conspicuous position; if that term can be used where all positions were open to full observation.

But Sylvie saw nothing of the gaily-dressed spectators, and Beaujeu saw nothing but her. He was watching the strange flushing and paling of her cheeks; noting the whiteness of her quivering lips; the dilation of her large eyes, which gave her face a look of nightmare terror, as though she were praying to wake from some frightful dream.

The concert opened with the noble overture from the opera of "The Prophet."

Sylvie had never heard it before. At the first few chords she drew a long breath, as though the air, which was stifling her, had suddenly grown light and clear; her head turned involuntarily towards the performers, and her eyes were riveted upon them as if she took in the entrancing sounds by her vision as well as by her hearing.

A solo, duet, and trio followed; her attention seemed wholly absorbed, and her countenance glowed with delight.

Beaujeu held the programme in his hand, but did not address her until the fourth performance concluded; then he whispered:

"It is your turn now, child."

Monsieur Le Grand approached and offered her his hand.

Beaujeu did not dare to glance at her as she rose. Looking neither to the right nor left, he walked to the piano and took his seat.

A derisive murmur ran in and out among the musicians, as Sylvie advanced to the front of the platform; and Lablache took his place at her side, rapturously greeted by the audience.

The rotundity of his proportions, and the self-satisfaction, mingled with native *bonhommie* expressed in his countenance, contrasted strongly with Sylvie's slender form, *spirituelle* look, and the bending humility of her appearance. But she had ceased to tremble; she had a true passion, an absolute veneration for music; and the masterly strains to which she had been listening had stirred her inmost soul, and left its finest chords still vibrating. The audience had all faded from before her sight—her perfect unconsciousness of self gave her self-possession.

We pass over the effect produced by Lablache's exquisite vocalization, which never failed to create enthusiasm.

The very first notes, liquid, rich and clear, which issued from Sylvie's lips, took all ears captive, and caused a great hush. Her voice now gushed forth in a wild flood—now softly rippled and rolled in waves of liquid sound—now floated and melted away in silvery echoes. And again the wonderful metamorphosis, which we have before described, took place. Her blue eyes, no longer frightfully dilated, filled with lustrous dew—the elastic lips lost their bloodless pallor, and took the most bewitching shape—the sallow cheeks were dyed with the softest blush—the drooping figure rose erect, and gained a startling height and majesty—she looked the very muse of song incarnate!

---

* The title of this tale sounds paradoxical, but the reader is solicited not to judge of its appropriateness until after the perusal of the narrative.

Thunders of applause pealed around her at the close of the duet, but if she heard, she did not notice them, or comprehend that they were in any degree a tribute to herself.

The voice of Monsieur Le Grand, congratulating her, broke the spell by which she was bound. Then she understood that she had passed the ordeal, that she had triumphed! She gave him one look of almost amazed gratitude, and, unconscious of the staring crowd—unmindful of the time and place, turned suddenly to her master, threw herself into his arms and burst into tears!

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin!" and the naturalness and spontaneity of the action elicited a tumultuous response from the sympathetic crowd. The clamor startled her; she lifted up her head and shrank away abashed.

Maitre Beaujeu, in spite of his own ill-concealed emotion, had enough presence of mind left to cover the awkwardness of her position, and re-conduct her to her seat.

"Monsieur Le Grand shook him cordially by the hand, saying, "You have a treasure in your pupil, Monsieur; I wish you joy! you may well be proud of her triumph to-night, and look forward to her distinguishing herself. I claim a little share of the honor myself, because my esteem for you, my confidence in your judgment, has procured me the happiness of presenting her to the public."

Monsieur Le Grand, with his wonted shrewdness, foresaw that Sylvie's rare contralto voice, and the passion, power, and skill she had evinced, would render her a valuable addition to his corps, and by excessive suavity he hoped to efface the memory of his late mistrustful coldness. Beaujeu was only too ready to be flattered and conciliated.

A number of the performers had gathered around Sylvie, but her face was covered with her hands—she still sobbed uncontrolably.

"Really, Mademoiselle," said Monsieur Le Grand, "these should be tears of joy after your great success; but violent emotion will injure your beautiful voice. Your pupil is very nervous, Monsieur Beaujeu. You must be careful of her; I find excessive excitement very prejudicial to the vocal powers."

Poor Sylvie! "Tears of joy!" Yes, perhaps they were, but they were tears that had their source in want and suffering, and hope deferred that made the heart sick; for these had rendered her physically so weak that she had no control over her emotion.

The performance which had been interrupted, now continued; Sylvie had only been engaged to sing in the duet with Lablache, and solely to enable him to be heard; but Monsieur Le Grand received a message from the Count, informing him that the audience desired to hear the young debutante once more. Maitre Beaujeu feared that Sylvie could not regain sufficient composure to do herself justice, and objected, though very feebly, for he was sensible of the compliment. Le Grand, who regarded the wish of the public as the law of an artist, would listen to no refusal, and Beaujeu, greatly perplexed, was forced to yield. He went up to Sylvie and took his seat by her side; she was still weeping immoderately.

"Sylvie, I never saw you cry so before; it is very wrong—very childish; it will harm you—you must cease."

No answer, but renewed tears.

"Sylvie, you do not know that your trial is not yet over; you have more to accomplish to-night."

Her hands dropped from her face with the start she gave. "More?" was all she could ejaculate.

"Yes, you must sing again."

"Oh, my master, impossible!"

"Possible, and to be!" replied Beaujeu, resuming his usual stern manner. "The sooner you collect yourself the better, unless you wish to neutralize the effect you have produced. I tell you that you are to sing again at the conclusion of the concert. You will sing that beautiful closing air from the Sonnambula, which I arranged to suit your voice."

Sylvie did not reply, but the shock communicated by this command checked the torrent of her tears. Maitre Beaujeu said no more for some time, and she sat still, looking almost petrified, so suddenly had she been calmed.

By and by Beaujeu turned to her again; "Well, Sylvie, you will be ready?"

"I fear I cannot sing!"

"*Cannot sing* when the public requests it?" answered Beaujeu, this time with unaffected savageness. "If you are the public's servant, you must obey the public's orders; you must have no will, no pleasure, no indulgence of your own. That's the first lesson for you to learn, and harder lessons will follow. I tell you the audience demands it, and you *must* sing!"

Sylvie did not reply.

"Well, am I to have an answer? You *must* sing, I say!"

Again she thought of the sacrificed violin. The inward struggle caused her flushed countenance to become ashy pale, but she looked up and said, "If you command me, I must make the attempt. Have I much time?"

Beaujeu examined the programme. "There are two more pieces."

Not another word was uttered by either until the last song was concluded and Beaujeu silently offered her his hand. Monsieur Le Grand, however, pressed forward, and himself conducted her to the front of the platform. Then swelled loud acclamations from every side. She had created a sensation for which the audience had been wholly unprepared; the listeners were taken by storm. The atmosphere of mystery which surrounded her added to the charm. No one knew who she was nor whence she came; but that she was a child of genius was the unanimous verdict.

As the boisterous greeting struck on her ears, Sylvie gave a frightened glance around, as though she were seeking some mode of escape.

Maitre Beaujeu whispered "Sylvie!" in a tone of rebuke that recalled her to herself.

The glorious voice burst forth once again, as deep, and rich, and clarion-like as before, and Amina's joyful strain seemed the outburst of Sylvie's own internal happiness. Never was rapture more eloquently, more thrillingly made vocal. As the last silvery cadence died away, and before a conducting hand could be offered, she quietly returned to her seat. She had taken no heed of the enthusiastic plaudits—she was wholly unaware that an audience expect the stereotyped, smiling obeisance with which musicians recognize every noisy token of approval. But the evident unsophistication evinced by her ignorance of the usual, hackneyed style of receiving and courting public favor, increased the strong impression of originality which she had already made upon the delighted spectators.

Monsieur Le Grand was loud in his compliments to both master and pupil, and Lablache, with the generosity of a true artist, added his congratulations.

The audience had risen, the singers too were departing. The Count had come forward with several of his friends, and was standing by the steps of the platform. Le Grand rightly conjectured that this group of admirers desired to be presented to the successful neophyte. In making the wished for introduction, he courteously included Maitre Beaujeu. Sylvie bowed with downcast eyes, and could not syllable a single word, in answer to the eulogiums showered upon her. Maitre Beaujeu replied in her stead, with really surprising tact and self-possession; but, seeing that her confusion every moment increased, he somewhat abruptly bade good evening, and led her away.

As they passed, the human stream parted and left a wake of murmured praises behind the twain. Once more in the library, Sylvie donned the shabby, black mantilla, tied on the old lace veil, and, though Le Grand was conversing in an earnest tone with his humble associate, she took Maitre Beaujeu's arm with an *empressement* which showed her anxiety to depart. Beaujeu saw that her strength was nearly exhausted, and hastily making an appointment with Le Grand for the morrow, conducted her into the hall; but was not destined to reach the street door as quickly as he anticipated.

A young girl who might have passed for the Titania of the *beau monde*, so fairy-like was her form, so ærial her presence, left the gentleman's arm upon which she was leaning, ran up to Sylvie, and took her hand, exclaiming, "Oh, Mademoiselle, you have given us such true delight! I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed your singing!"

Sylvie looked up at the sound of the fresh, girlish voice, and there was something in the joyous young face which inspired her with confidence, and unsealed her lips.

"I am so glad!" she murmured, "but it was Maitre Beaujeu."

"Then we owe our thanks to him," answered the young lady's escort, bowing to the musician with a deference which showed he could honor age, and appreciate talent.

"How pale and weary you look!" remarked the beautiful girl, "and how cold your hand is! Are you very tired?"

"I believe I am tired—I am so unaccustomed to——" Sylvie hesitated, not knowing how to finish the sentence properly.

"Then we ought not to detain you longer, though I waylaid you on purpose to make you stay and talk with us."

"Mademoiselle, you are very kind, and we are highly flattered," replied Maitre Beaujeu; "I fear my pupil, Mademoiselle Sylvie de la Roche, is more fatigued than she confesses. She is not strong, and we have some distance to go. We will therefore beg you to pardon us, and allow us to say good evening."

"Good evening, then; but, Mademoiselle Sylvie, (what a pretty name!) I hope to hear you sing often—oh! very, *very* often. Be sure I shall not forget you, and you must not forget me. Will you not wear this little ring to remind you of that compact?" she added, naively. "It is not worth presenting, but you will accept it, and wear it for the sake of Honorine."

She drew from her finger a gold ring, holding a heart-shaped ruby in the centre, and placed it on the slender finger of Sylvie, who had removed her gloves, for they were saturated with tears. It was the first ring that had ever sparkled upon her hand.

The gentleman whom Honorine had given her bouquet to hold, selected a sprig of heliotrope, and, presenting it to Sylvie, said, in a tone of reverential admiration: "And will you not also accept this humble offering?"

"Mademoiselle—Monsieur," replied Maitre Beaujeu, in a somewhat stately manner, for he began to feel the importance of his position, "my pupil is much honored by your approbation; you will allow me to thank you for her. Once more, good evening."

This time he succeeded in drawing Sylvie away, and they passed out of the door and down the steps, and were approaching the gate of the court-yard, when they heard a hurried footfall behind them.

"Have you not a carriage waiting, Monsieur Beaujeu?" asked the gentleman from whom they had just parted. "I thought that you seemed pedestrianly disposed. I must insist upon your using my carriage. Antoine, drive up."

Before Beaujeu could answer, the servant, obeying his master's orders, was at the gate, and the gaily-dressed *chasseur* dismounted, and let down the coach-steps. The musician hesitated, but the young nobleman (for such the arms upon his coach-panels proclaimed him to be) handed Sylvie into the carriage in a manner which precluded all discussion. Maitre Beaujeu followed.

"Give your orders to Antoine, Monsieur Beaujeu. I wish you a good evening."

Saying this, he withdrew, probably to save the music-master the mortification of naming in his presence some very humble locality.

The order to the Rue St. Denis, numero —, was given, and the horses started at a rapid pace.

"Oh! Maitre Beaujeu," exclaimed Sylvie, "how much I owe you!"

"You will repay the debt tenfold, child, if you continue to succeed; therefore gratitude need not oppress you."

"It does not—it is delightful to feel grateful. How my father will rejoice, and my poor mother! And Ma'm'selle Ursule, too—she seemed so much interested. How bright all the world looks to me to-night! There is something exhilarating in the very air—something that mounts to my brain, and almost makes my head light."

"The soft pressure of the first roses of triumph," replied Beaujeu. "But they are not thornless, child—we cannot hope for *that*. One only feels the dewy leaves at first, but the prick of the thorns must also be experienced in time."

"Oh, doubtless, *in time, in time!*" exclaimed Sylvie, merrily, "but not *in anticipation!* for that would be to experience it once more than is necessary. My dear master, do you know who that—who the—who the young lady is who spoke to us?"

That was not precisely the question that rose to Sylvie's lips, but she changed her query before it found breath.

"No; but she is exceedingly lovely, though so diminutive, and she had the bearing of a little queen—a veritable *Reine des Fées*. The gentleman who escorted her has a most distinguished appearance; the coat of arms on his carriage shows that he is a nobleman."

"They are very grand people, then? very grand and high people?"

"Yes, you may be sure of that."

Sylvie sighed involuntarily.

Maitre Beaujeu did not notice this inappropriate demonstration in answer to his assertion. His tongue was unloosed for the first time since Sylvie had known him; and he told her of the distinguished company he had played before in his youth, of the reverses he had met, owing to the jealousy and treachery of his associates, and perhaps to his own lack of ability to push himself forward; he dwelt with much pathos upon his trials, his depression, his struggles to support his aged mother, and he pictured the hopes that sprang into existence at the discovery of Sylvie's talent, and which now promised to become tangible realities.

The young maiden drank in every word, dreaming meanwhile of the golden future that might be in store for her needy master, if the bright auguries of this night proved prophetic. She had almost reared an air-castle over his head, which would have done credit to her father's ingenuity as a cloud-land architect, when the carriage stopped.

At the noise of the wheels, the *concierge* hastened to the door, but started back in amazement at the sight of a magnificent equipage, a coachman in rich livery, and a gorgeously-attired *chasseur*. What was her bewilderment when the steps of the carriage were let down, and Maitre Beaujeu descended, and carefully handed out Sylvie!

Old dame Manot involuntarily crossed herself, as though she felt under the influence of witchcraft.

As Maitre Beaujeu passed her, hurrying Sylvie on, the dame could scarcely command breath to gasp out:

"Ma'm'selle Sylvie has had a great success at the concert, then?"

"Certainly," replied Beaujeu, with his wonted brusqueness; "my pupil has achieved a signal triumph. Have the goodness to stand aside."

Dame Manot planted herself directly in their path.

Maitre Beaujeu tried to hurry Sylvie on, but she kindly held out her hand to the old woman, and said:

"Thank you for being glad."

"Who told you she was glad?" asked Beaujeu, sharply. "Do you suppose poor people are ever glad to see other poor people rising above them? She is more likely to hate you than to like you the better for your success. And as for rejoicing—bah! that's not human nature."

"Then, perhaps, it's angel nature," answered Sylvie, gaily, hastening up the stair; "and I think there's enough of the angel in good dame Manot for her to rejoice at my joy."

"Angel nature! Bah! A pretty pattern of an angel!"

"Sylvie was considerably in advance of her tutor. As she reached her own door, she nearly stumbled over a dark object that lay curled up close to the threshold. It stirred at her touch.

"Is it you at last, Ma'm'selle Sylvie?" asked Mathieu. "I must have fallen asleep, I have waited here so long. Have you triumphed? Is all well? Oh! tell me quickly."

"They say I have, good Mathieu. They say I did Maitre Beaujeu credit."

"And it was a grand place? And you wore my poor flowers all among the great people?"

"Yes—I believe it was a very grand place; and I have the roses still in my hair—see!" and she threw off her veil and displayed the June roses drooping their heads among her rich braids.

But the June rose, that blossomed in her bosom when she went forth, had been displaced and there a sprig of heliotrope lay, but *that* she did not exhibit to Mathieu.

Maitre Beaujeu came panting up the stairs.

"Who is that? Little rascal, is it you? lying in wait for Madamoiselle Sylvie, as usual?"

At the sound of that voice Mathieu vanished.

"Good night—go to bed at once, and rest!" said Beaujeu, as Sylvie was about to open her own door.

"Will you not come in to see how glad they will be?"

"No; they are sure to make fools of themselves, and I have abundant opportunities of beholding that exhibition."

Ursule was sitting with Monsieur and Madame de la Roche. At the sight of Sylvie's radiant face they all rose. Her father caught her in his arms.

"Victory! Victory!" he shouted. "She has triumphed! Did I not say she would?"

Ursule and the mother wept with joy, for though Sylvie at first was unable to utter one word, her silence was as eloquent as the most profuse language. When she had been tenderly embraced and congratulated by each in turn, she found voice to reply to her father's manifold inquiries, and thus related the events of the evening. But when she described the gracious young lady who had placed a ring upon her finger, she wholly omitted to mention her noble-looking escort, nor did she allude to the odorous sprig of heliotrope he had so gracefully presented her—perhaps the incident was so trifling that it had escaped her memory.

The rejoicing was interrupted by a sharp knock at the door, followed by the intrusion of Maitre Beaujeu's sour face.

"I say, you senseless people, unless you let that girl go to bed she'll be ill to-morrow, and there will be another downfall of Monsieur de la Roche's pasteboard houses. She's worn out, and has a fever at this moment. Look at the bright red spots on her cheeks! As her master, I order my pupil to go to bed at once, and command her to talk no more to-night. Sylvie, I expect to be obeyed."

"You shall be, my dear master; I do feel very much exhausted, and I am oppressively warm."

As she spoke her mother touched her hands, and exclaimed, in alarm—

"Oh! they are burning! She'll have a fever, and perhaps die! Oh, dear, oh, dear! Good fortune never looks in upon us but to be scared away again! It will not stay to cheer us even for one night."

"No wonder! Your endless croaking would put anything pleasant to flight," retorted Beaujeu. "Give your daughter a cool drink, and let her go instantly to bed, and if she should feel inclined to sleep in the morning, let her lie still. There ought to be no more chattering here to-night. Go to your own room, Ma'm'selle Ursule."

Ursule, who was easily awed by the morose musician, very meekly stole past him, carrying on her arm her old mantilla and veil.

Beaujeu, as he withdrew, shook his head at Sylvie, repeating, "Go to bed! Go to bed at once!"

Her mother, whose fears were only too readily excited, urged the not unwilling Sylvie to obey.

The father talked on long after he retired, driving his magnificent greys for the greater part of the night, but the imaginary steeds, and their fancied owner, were now and then brought to a sudden halt by his wife's dolorous ejaculation, "Suppose she has a fever! *There* will be the end of all our hopes!"

Did we suggest that the flower worn in Sylvie's bosom might have escaped her recollection? That must have been an error, for the roses she took from her hair were left to wither, forgotten, upon her little toilette table, but the heliotrope was tenderly laid between the leaves of her Bible.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

INCREDIBLE FACT.—The Abbé Regnier, secretary of the French Academy, was collecting in his hat from each member a contribution for a certain purpose. The president Roses, one of the forty, was a great miser, but had paid his quota; which the Abbé not perceiving, he presented the hat a second time. Roses, as was to be expected, said he had already paid. "I believe it," answered Regnier, "though I did not see it." "And I," added Fontanelle, who was beside him, "I saw it, but I do not believe it."

THE RESCUE.

BY DR. S. COMPTON SMITH.

One afternoon, a few weeks after our army had obtained quiet possession of Monterey, I had ridden unaccompanied, to the head-quarter camp, in the pleasant grove of Santo Domingo; and having paid my respects to our good, brave Commander-in-chief, was on my return to my own quarters, in the city, when I was aroused by a soft, musical voice, uttering the friendly salutation of—

"*Buenas tardes, Señor Medico!*" (Good evening, Sir Doctor!)

I lowered my eyes from the mutilated tree-tops, to the narrow *banqueta*, which ran along the wall, under the cool shadows, and noticed a young and pretty Mexicana, dressed in the picturesque fashion of the better class of Pablanas, who, gazing at me with marked attention, was approaching me, evidently with the intention of addressing me.

I bowed to the fair stranger, and returning her courteous salutation, would have passed on. But seeing my intention, the girl stepped directly in front of my horse, and raising one finger of her pretty dimpled hand, motioned me to stop.

I did so, and dismounting, stood before her for a moment, waiting for an explanation of this unexpected encounter.

The girl gazed an instant more in my face, as if to make more certain of my identity, uttered an exclamation of joy, and exclaimed—"Yes, it *is* so!—I knew I was not mistaken!—You are el Medico—Don Estaban!—no?"

"So I am called by your people," I answered. "But, tell me, who are *you?*"

"Ah, Señor, have you then forgotton Chuchita!" she asked, in surprise. "You were very kind to my poor Lucio!"

"Chuchita! Ah! indeed, it *is* you!" And I instantly recalled the kind-hearted sweetheart and nurse of a wounded Mexican sergeant I had had in one of my hospital wards after a battle, and whom after his convalescence I had permitted to return to his people. "Ah! how strange that I should not have recognized that pretty face! But where, tell me, is now the wounded Lucio, in whom you took so great an interest?" I asked. "Doubtless he has returned to his corps, and is waiting for another opportunity to burn powder against los Americanos!"

"No, no, Señor! he has not gone back to his regiment; and it is on his account I have watched for your return this evening."

"Well, what can I do for you?" I inquired.

"Much, Señor, if you will but go with me," said the girl, on whose face, now that the excitement of our meeting had passed, I could perceive a shadow of deep anxiety. "Will you do so?"

"Most assuredly, my sweet Chuchita," I answered, "if I can be of service to you, or any of your friends. But where would you have me go? what would you have me do?"

"Meet me at the *jacal*, beyond the bridge yonder, to-night, Señor, one hour after your people have beat the tattoo, and have with you ten brave voluntarios, armed, if need be, for a fight. Oh! tell me, Señor, will you come?"

"I certainly will, Chuchita; but——"

"Ask me no questions now, Señor," said the girl, eagerly interrupting me. "You shall learn all to-night."

And waving her hand gracefully to me, she returned to the *banqueta*, and mingling with the tide of promenaders now collecting in the shady walks, soon disappeared among the trees.

"Oh!" thought I, as I remounted my impatient horse, and galloped homeward, "here's certainly a chance for an adventure. What can that Mexican girl possibly want of me and ten armed men? She certainly would not betray us into the hands of her countrymen, many bands of whom, I know, are still hanging about the vicinity of our little army, for women—and of all others Mexican women—are rarely traitors. What does she mean?"

And with these queries I puzzled my brain, till I drew rein in front of my city quarters, and relinquishing the animal to the peon awaiting my arrival, I entered my solitary apartments.

It so happened that among the volunteer companies that had been detailed for guard-service in the city, was that of my friend Jack Vandevier, of one of the Ohio regiments; and I lost no time in repairing to his quarters, on the *plaza*, and relating to him my amusing interview with the pretty Chuchita.

"What can the girl mean?" he asked.

"That's the very question I've put to myself," said I "But I've no doubt she has some rich adventure in reserve for somebody, for that she was troubled about something I am certain. Perhaps some 'faire ladye' is in peril among the black banditti of the chaparral, and the distressed damsel craves our service. But, whatever it may be, the girl's lover is someway concerned in it; and now that I remember it, she said that it was on his account she had sought the interview with me."

"Well, well, Doc., whatever it may be, you can count upon Jack Vandevier, and as many of his brave fellows as you desire. How many shall it be?"

"Oh, half a dozen's enough, though the girl directed that I should bring more. You and I, Jack, will make eight, and that's enough, you know, for five times that number of yellow-skins; and after all, I doubt if it will turn out a fighting affair."

"Who knows? I hear the chaparral and the neighboring ranches are full of the enemy, watching our motions, and ready, like hungry wolves, to spring upon our unguarded trains, and to arrest our straggling men. But I'll be with you, Doc., and have the boys along. I'll meet you on the bridge."

The tattoo had sounded over the city, and while its notes were dying over the ragged sides of the overhanging sierra, I bent my steps across the plaza, and through the narrow streets, in the direction of the Virgin's Bridge, where I was to meet my friend. I had not long to wait, for scarcely had I seated myself upon the stone parapet beneath the statue of *La Purissima*, than I heard approaching footsteps, and in another moment Jack and his men stood before me, and after a hurried consultation, we moved quietly toward the deserted *jacal* Chuchita had pointed out to me.

For more than an hour we waited the arrival of the girl. She did not come as she had promised, and we were about to return, laughing heartily, but yet half vexed at the harmless joke she had played upon us, when at last she made her appearance across the ruined cane-field between the hut and the citadel, and joined us.

"Have I kept you waiting, Señores?" she asked. "It is scarcely an hour ago since the guard beat the retreat, and I said *one hour* after tattoo."

"Well, Señorita," I answered, "you see we are all here, and now tell us for what we have come?"

Without giving a direct answer, the girl entered the jacal, and quickly striking a light with the cigar lighter which is the invariable accompaniment of all Mexicans, she drew a paper from her bosom and handed it to me.

Stooping to the dim taper, I examined the coarsely executed document.

"I have seen this before," said I. "It is that atrocious proclamation of your robber governor, Canales, in which he commands all 'good Mexicans' to give no quarter to such American prisoners as may chance to fall into their hands, and to put to death, 'without benefit of clergy,' all of their own countrymen who may be proved guilty of having intercourse with us. Now, Chuchita, what has this vile document to do with our meeting here to-night?"

"Much, Señor—*all!*"

And then the girl, with many tears, told us that her lover, Sergeant Lucio, soon after leaving my hospital, had guided a party of Rangers to Cardareta, where they fell in with and whipped out a band of Canales's cut-throats occupying the place; that he had been recognized among the Texans by the guerillas, and that, having been arrested the previous day, he was then a prisoner among them, and was to be shot as a traitor in the morning, unless we could rescue him from their hands.

This, then, was the adventure for which our services were required, and interpreting the words of the girl, I asked Jack Vandevier and the boys if they were willing to undertake it.

"Of course we are! Lead the way, pretty one! We'll have the lad all safe and sound, or the Buckeye State will have to count seven less of us on our next company returns," said Jack.

"Yes, of course we're in!" cried the others.

"Now, Chuchita," said I, "where are these chaparral wolves to be found?"

"I can lead you to them, men," was the reply; and leaving the jacal under the girl's guidance, we struck out upon the open fields beyond the town, and taking a narrow trail that skirted the base of the Camanche Peak, followed it for some time in silence, in the direction of the Pueblo of Guadelupe.

Without speaking, and treading noiselessly, we followed the girl for about half an hour, when the latter halted upon the edge of an open space in the wild olive thickets through which we had just been passing, and laying her finger upon her lips, whispered to Jack, who was close behind her—

"Look! there are the thieves!"

And pointing across the opening, to the opposite copse, she directed our attention to a group of horses tethered among the trees; while, by the aid of the moonlight that struggled through the thickets beyond, we could perceive a large party of rancheros scattered over the ground, and who, wrapped in their serapes, were locked in the embrace of sleep.

Not all, however, had yielded to the drowsy god, for between us and them, and near the animals, sentinels were posted; and moving lazily, and without thought of a surprise, up and down their beats, they seemed to look enviously towards their sleeping comrades.

A dim and nearly consumed camp-fire was smoldering in their midst; but by its faint light could be seen a person bound, in a crouching position, to the foot of an ebony tree; and while I was looking a slight breeze stirred the tree tops, and letting down a stream of moonlight, showed me the familiar face of my quondam patient, the *lancero*-sergeant, the Lucio so tenderly nursed by our pretty guide, and the object of this night adventure in the chaparral.

The young man, unlike the crowd that surrounded him, was wide awake, and looking anxiously about him, as if expecting our approach.

The girl had also caught sight of the prisoner, and pointing towards him, whispered:

"See! see, Señor, *there* is my Lucio! But, alas! we cannot save him! for see, his guard is too strong for us. When I was here before there were scarcely half a score of them, and now they are more than thrice that number!"

"Hush! Chuchita!" said I, for I feared the girl, in her excitement, would attract the notice of the sleepy sentinels, "calm your fears, girl, we will find a way to save him yet—trust us."

Withdrawing cautiously to the deeper shadow of the thickets, I motioned Vandevier and his men about me, for a hasty consultation.

"It is very evident, boys," said I, "that these fellows are too many for us. It is true we might make a rush upon them, and taking them by surprise, wipe out a dozen or two; but, then, some of us would also lose the number of our mess; and, after all, it's scarcely probable that our object could be accomplished."

"Well then, my lad," said Jack Vandevier, "what do you propose to do? You wouldn't, after coming so far with the señorita, back out, and leave her sweetheart among these cannibals, would you?"

"By no means, Jack!" I answered. "One of us must creep among those sleeping yellow-skins, and cut the fellow's cords, and then let him steal off the best way he knows; for, don't you perceive, the greasers have only a horse guard out!"

"Old fellow, you're right!" exclaimed the brave Buckeye officer, in a voice almost loud enough to spoil all, "you're right, Doc.! and I'm just the chap for the job. I can crawl as noiselessly as a wild Camanche. Here, Thurston, lend me your 'Arkansaw.'"

And taking the knife, which was readily handed to him, the gallant fellow disappeared in the darkness.

At this moment, Chuchita, who seemed to have understood our intentions, rose to her feet behind the stem of a tall nopal, which completely hid her figure, and placing her fingers to her mouth, gave utterance to a low, musical, bird-like note, such as I had frequently before heard when encamped in the chaparral. It was the call of a common night bird of the country.

The sentinels paid no attention to the sound. But not so the prisoner. He seemed to recognize it as a signal agreed upon; and rising to an upright position, while his hands and feet were confined to the body of the tree, he peered eagerly about him, as if expecting some promised aid.

While we were watching his motions, a slight trembling of the grass behind him was perceived, and then the gleam of the dull fire light fell upon a bright blade, and then a hand followed the knife. We knew that Vandevier had reached the spot,—so did the prisoner,—for without betraying the least surprize, he remained motionless, while we could see the rawhide thongs fall to the ground; and the next moment the spot where he had been standing was vacant.

Still the sentinels moved lazily back and forth, and the sleepers, little dreaming of the enemy so near, breathed heavily, while we watched for the return of our brave comrade. Soon he rejoined us.

"All right, boys! all right, girl,—here's your sweetheart!" and Lucio following close in his rear, was locked in the close, loving embrace of the sobbing girl.

Three months after this night adventure in the chaparral, Captain Jack Vandevier and his company, with myself and a few selected friends, received a special invitation to a "fandango," given in one of the better residences of Sicamore Street. It was in honor of the bridal of Sergeant Lucio Lozans, late of the *Lanceros*, and Señorita Maria de Jésus Cardenas, better known by the pet name of Chuchita.

M. LALANDE, the French astronomer, during the whole time of the revolution, confined himself to the study of that science. When he found that he had escaped the fury of Robespierre, he jocosely said, "I may thank my stars for it."

INVOCATION.

BY MARY FORREST.

Stoop to me, lofty and lowly One.
Stoop very near!
Smile on me, blessed and holy One,
Make the WAY clear.

Show me the TRUTH in its goldenness,
Without alloy.
Rich, rare and ripe in its oldenness,
Bearing a joy.

Give me that LIFE in its purity,
Glory and peace,
Which through an endless futurity
Is not to cease.

Startle my soul from inanity,
Break up its sleep.
Cry to my heart of humanity—
Deep unto deep.

Glow on my being's intenseness,
Till the live flame
Mounts through the dim earthy denseness,
To its great aim.

Have me all day in Thy keeping;
Lend me thine hand
When the lone midnight is creeping
Over life's strand.

THE TWO VASES.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"Do you admire them?" said the shopman, in that bland, enticing voice so peculiar to the true type of his class.

"They're charming," answered the young man with enthusiasm. "Charming!" and he lifted one of the elegant Birmingham glass vases from the shelf near which he was standing, and held it toward the light. "Does it not seem like a very miracle of art? Could anything be more perfect than this wreath of green ivy, twining with the very grace of nature around lozenge-shaped ornaments, rich in color as ruby wine?"

"Let me send them home," said the shopman, in his soft, bewitching voice.

"Thank you; but I can't afford to indulge in luxuries of this kind," was the prompt reply.

"They're cheap; the cheapest pair of vases, style and quality considered, that I have in the store."

"What is the price?"

"Only twenty-five dollars."

What a light thing the shopman's voice made of twenty-five dollars! A mere trifle, scarcely worthy of a thought. But the tempted customer shook his head, as he put the vase which he had been holding in his hand back upon the shelf, saying:

"Too heavy for my pocket."

"Oh, that's only a fancy," said the shopman. "Let me send them home. It's of no consequence about the money; that will do at any time. Surprise your wife! Think how delighted she will be with these charming ornaments for her parlor mantel-piece. I know ladies' weaknesses in this direction as well as the next man."

And he took back from the shelf, where his customer had returned it, one of the glass vases, and began calling attention to its peculiar points of beauty.

"It's of no consequence about the money!" Ah, that little sentence was doing its work in the young man's mind. He was a book-keeper, receiving only a moderate salary, and not able to indulge in the luxury of twenty-five dollar vases; and, much as he might have desired to possess the pair now offered, the question of cash down would have settled the matter without debate. But, it was of no consequence as to the money! This put a different face on the matter. He began to look with more strongly-favoring eyes upon the richly-colored and exquisitely-cut and molded ornaments. He saw them gracing his little parlor, and giving it a new attraction; saw the pleased face of his wife; heard the admiration of friends and visitors; felt the delight of possessing such exquisite pieces of art.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

The shopman knew enough of Byron for trade purposes, at least. This was one of his favorite quotations. It was true poetry to him, for it put money into his pocket almost daily, turning, as it so often did, the customer's nicely-equipoised debate on the side of consent.

"A perpetual enjoyment," said the young man, in his thought, responsive to the tempter's suggestion from the poet, "and not only to myself and wife, but to our friends."

"I will send them home, Mr. Talbot; I want you to possess these vases. They're unique of their kind, and have been more admired than anything in the store. The sight of them will be as sunshine in your home. Every house should have in it articles of true taste and beauty. Money is always well spent in this direction. Nothing pays so well. Beauty educates the mind, and lifts us above the rude and depraving things of common life; gives happiness, in short. So, I will send them home, and, at your own convenience, you can pay for them. Take two, three, or four months · any time will suit us."

"Very well," answered Mr. Talbot; "if you will do so, I can't help myself, of course. I think the vases exquisite, and I know my wife will be charmed with them."

From the store in which our young friend's prudence had been overcome by what, in his case, was little less than a covetous desire to possess the beauty his eyes looked upon with admiration, he went to his work for the day, not feeling altogether satisfied with himself. Prudence had urged him not to buy the vases, and endeavored to make him see that it would be wrong to incur any debt, seeing that his light income barely sufficed to reach the expense of their frugal housekeeping. But in a moment of weakness he had put aside the suggestions of prudence. Now, however, the clear voice of this true monitor was heard again, disturbing his self-satisfaction, and throwing a shadow over the sunshine of anticipated pleasure.

Very impatient was Mr. Talbot for evening to come, when, turning from his desk, a free man, he could go home, look upon his beautiful vases, and witness the pleasure of his wife in this charming addition to her little parlor. At last the sun went down in the brief day of closing autumn, and our young friend bent his light steps homeward, thinking of scarcely anything beside his new possessions, and the higher tone of pleasure it would give to the meeting with his wife. He expected to see the parlor lighted up, and to find her sitting there in silent admiration of the beautiful objects he had bought. But, no; all was dark as he came in sight of his dwelling. He felt a pressure of disappointment. Was it possible that the vases had not been sent home? He feared that it was so. His key rattled in the latch, and he pushed open the door. The gas flickered dimly in the passage, turned low by the prudent hand of his wife. As the jar of the closing door broke along the stillness, Mr. Talbot listened to hear the sound of his wife's footsteps, in a sudden start, on her way to meet him. But all remained silent. He drew off his coat, and hung it upon the rack, his feelings considerably dashed.

In their little sitting-room Mr. Talbot found his wife, busy with her needlework. She looked up, with her usual welcoming smile and pleasant words; but Mr. Talbot thought neither the smile nor tone as heart-free as usual. Perhaps this was because his picture of the meeting had been too warmly tinted in imagination.

"Was anything sent home to-day?" He could not keep back from this uppermost subject in his mind.

A light glanced over the face of Mrs. Talbot; but it was not the warm, glad light her husband looked to see.

"Yes, two beautiful vases. Whose are they?"

"Ours."

"No!"

"Yes, ours—yours, Mary. I bought them for you. Are they not exquisite?"

The light went fading out of Mrs. Talbot's countenance.

"Yes, they are very beautiful, Charles; but too handsome for our plain parlor."

"Not a bit of it, Mary. Just what they wanted. The mantel-piece has always looked so meagre, with only a pair of china match boxes, and that little painted imitation of Bohemian glass. But these are gems of art and beauty—things to give the mind a perpetual pleasure. Come! I must see them."

And Charles Talbot drew his wife away to the parlor, which was soon glowing in light from every lit burner in the room.

"What was the cost?"

Ah! how often does this question come as a damper to enthusiasm.

"Only twenty-five dollars." Mr. Talbot's voice lost a little of its firmness.

"Twenty-five dollars! Why, Charles! What could have possessed you!"

The young, prudent wife, who felt daily how closely their income held them to the necessity of a most careful expenditure, was betrayed into a tone of disapproval stronger than was at all agreeable to her husband.

"I didn't have to pay the money down," he said, in vindication of himself, yet with a coldness that came as a chill to the feelings of his wife.

Already the pair of vases which were to bring a new pleasure into their home, had come between them, and they stood further apart, instead of nearer together. Instinctively was this felt by Mrs. Talbot; and she tried to rally herself, and look pleased and interested. But, she had betrayed her real feelings and sentiments; and to cloak them now was no actual concealment.

"They are beautiful," she said, with an interest in her manner that only in part deceived her husband, taking one of them from the mantel-piece, and holding it to the light; "and I don't wonder you were tempted. What a rich ruby! It comes to the eyes laden with a sense of enjoyment, just as a deep, pure organ-tone, comes to the ear."

"And they are really very cheap." Ah, that was not aptly said for Mr. Talbot. No, they were not cheap for him—not cheap if the price had been twenty, or even fifteen, instead of twenty-five dollars; for he was not well enough off in the world to afford a luxury. And here let the remark be made, that all articles of taste and luxury—pictures, vases, statuettes and the like—which cannot be afforded; that is, which cannot be obtained without debt or the deprivation of things essential to use and comfort; always bring to the possessors more pain than pleasure. Their beauty soon dims; and the sight of them is always attended with a certain sense of disquietude. Covetous eyes take them in greedily, and will not be satisfied with anything less than possession; but after possession, their charm is gone.

"And they are really very cheap." No, it was not aptly said; and as the thought, how very dear they were for them, crept through the mind of Mrs. Talbot, the fine enthusiasm of her manner died away. She returned the vase she was holding, to the mantel-piece, and a sigh—it was involuntary—stole out upon the air.

One after another the gas lights were turned off by Mr. Talbot, in a kind of desperate deliberation, and in silence he and his young wife returned to their sitting-room. She took up the sewing which had been laid down on his entrance and bent close over it; and he drew a newspaper from his pocket, and commenced looking through its well filled columns for something of interest. But, nothing that he tried to read took hold of his mind. Steadily his thought turned itself away from things of general interest, and hovered around his pair of vases, the purchase of which he was already soberly regretting. Onward to the pay day his mind was beginning to reach, and the difficulty of saving twenty-five dollars from their income had a disheartening look. The idea of being in debt was producing an uncomfortable feeling. "Two, three, or four months." So the storekeeper had said. After two months, then, the twenty-five dollars would be due; and four months was the limit of time. The sum could not be paid in two months—the quarter's rent would interfere—and so, from that period, he would be in the uncomfortable state of a debtor not able to pay; borne with, two months longer, on sufferance. How native pride and independence felt a sting of shame!

"What are you thinking about, Mary?" Mr. Talbot, who looking for some time over the top of his unread newspaper, at the shadowed face of his wife, spoke out suddenly, and Mrs. Talbot looked up in a startled way, flushing, as though detected in something she would rather conceal.

"Will you give a penny for my thoughts?" she replied, endeavoring to appear indifferent as to their nature.

"Yes; or a dollar if you will. So let me see them." Mr. Talbot tried to smile in a pleasant way; but the mask did not fairly hide the real face that was clouded beneath. His wife answered:

"We cannot always determine the nature of our thoughts. They are often unbidden and unwelcome guests; and it is better, at times, to let them pass unspoken."

"Your thoughts may always be spoken to your husband, Mary," said Mr. Talbot, his voice falling into a tenderness of tone, that showed the intrusion of right feelings.

But Mrs. Talbot kept silence.

"You were thinking of the vases, Mary."

She did not reply.

"And of my weakness, folly, and extravagance——"

"No—no, Charles. That is no right reading of my thoughts." She spoke with a still hightening color.

"Then open the page, and let me read them just as they have recorded themselves. You were thinking of the vases. How did your thoughts run? Don't be afraid of hurting or offending me. I want to see this matter with your eyes. We cannot afford a pair of twenty-five dollar vases. You thought that."

"Yes."

"Well; and what besides?"

"I thought of Hannah, sleeping on the sacking, because we had not been able to spare the money for a mattrass or bed."

The parted lips of Mr. Talbot closed tightly, and his forehead drew together.

"And of the contrast between those showy vases and our plain parlor furniture—a contrast that will always be unpleasing to our eyes and a cause of remark by our visitors. Our extravagance and lack of good taste will, most likely, be the burden of our friends' comments."

"Maybe you are right," said Mr. Talbot. "Go on. What more of your thoughts?"

"The pay day must come. Will you be able to spare twenty-five dollars in three or four months from this time any better than you can spare it now? And will not this thought be all the while troubling you, and taking from the vases all beauty in your eyes? And suppose you can't pay for them when the price is due? The thought of your being in debt, and of the humiliation that must follow, really sickens me. Even a debt of twenty-five dollars may rob a man of all true enjoyment in life."

A long sigh struggled up from the young man's bosom.

"Your thoughts are of the right tone, Mary," he replied, with a sober face. "What a fool I was to let that smooth-tongued shopman entice me from common sense and common prudence. I should have known that no real enjoyment could lie for us in mere external beauty, gained at the price of self-disapprobation and debt."

That was one of the dullest evenings Mr. and Mrs. Talbot had spent together for a long time. A shadow as of some evil, seemed to rest on their spirits. They did not venture into the parlor again to look at their elegant vases, but instinctively avoided the apartment.

The tranquil sleep that usually came to the pillow of Mr. Talbot, did not visit him that night. His mind was excited with thoughts about the vases; and these kept him awake until after the small hours that strike on the side of the morning. When sleep came at last, he had one of those vivid dreams that surprise us when we recal them, by their strange and minute semblance to reality. It extended, apparently, through months, during all of which time the vases were a source of the keenest annoyances and mortifications. There were constant demands for the twenty-five dollars, and no ability to pay.

"You will have to wait longer, sir." He awoke long before day dawn, speaking these words aloud.

"Who will have to wait?" asked Mrs. Talbot; she was not really sleeping. Something had disturbed her rest, and once fairly awake, unpleasing thoughts about the vases had come to her mind in unwelcome intrusion, and kept her from oblivion again.

"Oh it's nothing—nothing. I was dreaming," he answered.

"Dreaming about what?"

But Mr. Talbot did not reply. A suspicion of the truth crossing the mind of his wife, kept her from pressing the question.

"If mere shadows can so affect us," was the thought of Mr. Talbot, as he lay with the vivid impression of that dream still in his consciousness, "what pain must be in the substance from which it is projected. If a vision of debt is so full of humiliation, the actuality must be terrible!"

When Mr. Talbot left his house next morning he had two packages in his arms. They were the Birmingham vases.

"What are these?" asked the shopman, whose bland persuasions had won consent from his customer on the day before, as Mr. Talbot came in and laid his two packages on the counter. There was only the faintest semblance of a smile on his face now, for he saw, by the shape of the packages, what was in them, and understood that the vases were to be returned. Without answering, Mr. Talbot removed the enveloping paper.

"Well, sir?" The shopman looked at the vases and then at his customer, in a mystified, questioning way, affecting not to understand what was clear to him as a sunbeam.

"I must ask the privilege of returning these articles," said Mr. Talbot.

"Why so?" the voice cut rather sharply.

"My wife doesn't care about them—in fact I can't afford to indulge in superfluities of this kind." The young man's face colored. His pride was touched. He felt humiliated. The purchase was a fair one, and there was, in his view, something of meanness in receding from a bargain. Still, he must get the vases off his hands, for to keep them would be to retain a source of perpetual annoyance.

"It's against our rule." How cold the voice; how impassive the manner. "We might exchange them. I don't see that we can do any better."

The worst was over with Mr. Talbot. He grew hard and resolute under this changed aspect of the shopman.

"I am sorry," he said, speaking firmly, "to be obliged to return these vases. But it is better for you and me both that it should be done. You will expect your money; and it may not come when you look for its receipt. The vases are handsome and will not wait long for a customer."

And saying this, the young man turned from the counter. As he did so, the words—"This is your property, not mine, and it will remain at your risk," were thrown after him, angrily. He came back and said, in a quiet voice that entirely concealed the disturbance he felt:

"Will you do me a favor, Mr. Jenkins?"

"What?"

"Sell these vases within two months, the shortest time in which I was to pay for them, and send me a bill for the difference between what they bring and twenty-five dollars?"

"I'd rather you'd keep them."

"That I am resolved not to do, and for the reason already given. I'm sorry you have made me feel so uncomfortable about a matter of but little importance to yourself. Oblige me in what I ask. If I am ready to make good any deficiency in price, why compel me to keep articles that I do not want?"

There was an unamiable, muttered acquiescence in this proposal, and Talbot retired, feeling more disturbed and unhappy than he had been for years.

"If some of my friends, whom I know to be indulging in elegancies and luxuries beyond their means, have anything of my experience in this the first transgression, I pity them!" said the young man, feelingly to himself, as he hurried along the street on his way to the counting-room where he was employed. "I will keep it in perpetual remembrance, as a wall of protection around me in future temptations."

That evening, as Charles Talbot stood in his plain but neatly furnished parlor, and looked at the two china match boxes, and imitation Bohemia vase that decorated his mantel-piece, they seemed so in harmony with everything else in the rooms, that a real sense of pleasure stole into his heart. They were not elegant and costly, but as being the best he could afford in the way of ornament, had more power in them to give peace of mind, than lay in the richest works of art and skill, obtained at the cost of self-disapproval, debt, or humiliating embarrassment.

"How weak and blind I was, Mary," he said, as he drew his arm around his wife. "The vases would have brought into our pleasant home the demon of disquiet."

"I am glad you returned them," was her gently spoken answer. "We do not need such things for happiness, Charles. There are higher, better, and surer sources, and we may go to them daily if we will. Contentment is great gain. Peace comes from right thoughts going down into right actions; not from a restless desire to possess whatever strikes the eye as beautiful or desirable. Let us be thankful for the good we have, and not suffer it to be thrown into shadow by the good of another. We lose all that we really have, and gain nothing by this. God knows best in what sphere of life we can be most useful to ourselves and to others—safest for this world and the next—happiest for time and for eternity. Let us steadily, tranquilly, patiently, move and shine in our sphere, and all will be well."

"The vases shall be my monitor. I will think of them when tempted again," replied Talbot, "and the recollection will quicken into life my better reason. The lesson was needed, and I have learned it by heart."

BUSINESS AGAINST HOUSEKEEPING.

BY A HOUSEKEEPER.

"What do *I* know about business?"

I do say, Brown, that you are an excessively provoking man! I know a great deal more about it than *you* do. Why, I was in the midst of it before you were out of school.

"Didn't know I'd own that I was so much older than you, hey?"

Did *ever* I try to hide it? Of *course* I own that I'm older than you are—a good deal older, and a good deal wiser, and you never need to hope that you're going to come any of your masculine gammon over *me*—never! I know men—I've seen clean through and through them, mentally and morally. I've *read* 'em, and don't need *you* to testify to me of what is in 'em. I also know that business trials *are* trials; but I also know that they have an interest and excitement which causes them to be much more tolerable than the monotonous, hum-drum life of household confinement and toil.

After having trapped me into this scrape, don't you flatter yourself that you can be excused from bearing your share of *my* trials. I will freely bear yours with you. You are "too considerate to annoy me with store troubles!" Thank you for your good intentions. If it *is* so unpleasant to you "to annoy me," you will of course make a practice of exchanging confidential grumblings, when I tell you that it would be a great relief and benefit to me. Now I know you come home tired, and that you feel that you are plagued enough in your business, and wish for only pleasant converse in your home; but you must reflect that you return to one far more weary both in mind and body, than you possibly can be. In the first place, I have not the strength and health that you have; in the second place, I have not the benefit and relaxation afforded by change of scene; in the third place, a *tread mill under cover* is exhaustive of all spirit and courage.

All day you are seeing different faces, are meeting with diverting incidents, or hearing diverting remarks; there is perpetually some new excitement afoot, whether pleasant or unpleasant it don't matter—it is not the same thing forever. And then there is always the closing hour, and the going home, to look forward to. *Your* day's work always has an end. And then the very magnitude and importance of your work and care is compensation—you feel that you are laying out yourself to some purpose; and when your work is done it *is* done, and you are rewarded. My work when it is done must be done over and over again, and there is neither interest, satisfaction, nor reward to it.

You, every now and then, can catch a half hour to run out with this friend or that; you go to examine a picture; you hurry across the street to "see a man;" you run round the corner to look at a new book; and even the going to dinner is always a relief, a pleasurable excitement. A lot of your hale fellows are in the saloon, and you eat and laugh because you enjoy your intermission. You see I understand these things—*I've been there.* "What did I come away for?" That's more than I know. I wish I had not come away. But you see it will not do for you to assume any of your manish airs to *me* when I attempt to tell you of the unelastic, never-changing, unrepaying, confining, depressing, rasping, provokingly minute, discouraging, innumerable, day and night miseries of housekeeping and children-raising.

Why, young sir, were a man obliged to endure the *one* trouble of bodily pain with which thousands of women worry through mountains of work, he would collapse and curl up like a worm on a hot shovel, and declare himself unfit for anything in the shape of work. Talk to me of men! *I* understand *them*, and *their business*, and *their politics*, though they try so hard to make a mystery of one, and though they *do* make corruption of the other.

DO RIGHT AND TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES.

Nobody was ever persecuted for being good, if you take the word of persecutors. It is always for some fault or some sin that people are punished. Who ever yet owned that he hated a man because he was so pure, so truthful, so unselfish? Who ever confessed that he was trying to harm a fellow creature because of an example which was a rebuke to his own evil course? Nobody.

When people persecute you because you are more generous than they, they always say it is because you are a fool who don't know the worth of money. When they would punish you for being truthful and honest above their standard, they say you are overturning the foundations of business, and are saying things that make mischief. When you demand justice for the helpless and poor, and that Christians should do *all things* in a manner not conformed to the spirit of this world—that is, do all things unselfishly, and in a magnanimous and loving spirit, they say you are a demagogue, and that you would upturn and overthrow society.

Your amiability they term shallowness; your spirit, temper; your self-sacrifice is to them a lack of appreciation for the good things of life, or a pride in suffering; if you contend for the right, they say you delight in controversy; if you keep silent, they will stigmatize you as a stupid or sullen "stick."

Do not think that people who have no enemies are the best people. In private life it is *barely possible* to be decidedly and uncommonly good without making enemies; but generally, even in private life, and *always* in public life, they that will live according to Gospel teachings will have enemies.

But there is another side to the picture, and that is, that they who do not attempt to live a conscientious life make enemies too, and have not the strength to meet and conquer them which comes from an upright soul and pure heart. It is far better to make enemies for the Lord's sake than for Satan's.

FEMALE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Female education is more detrimental to health and happiness than that of the male. Its grasp, its aim, is at accomplishments rather than acquirements—at guilding rather than at gold—at such ornaments as may dazzle by their lustre, and consume themselves in a few years, by the intensity of their own brightness, rather than those which radiate a steady light till the lamp of life is extinguished. They are most properly termed *accomplishments;* because they are designed to *accomplish* a certain object—MATRIMONY. That end, or rather beginning, obtained, they are about as useful to their owner as the lease of a house after the term has expired.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

THE map of the old world has been shaken over the new, and names have fallen out pretty much as it happened. Athens without any Greek; Rome without any Cicero; Paris without a Frenchman, and Amsterdam without a Dutchman; Venice and no Doge; Lebanon and not a cedar; Genoa and no maccaroni; Toledo and no Spaniard; Moscow and nothing but a cowbell.

THE power of dreams forces the infinite into the chambers of a human brain, and throws dim reflections from the eternities upon the mirrors of the sleeping mind.

MELANCHOLY sees the ultimate of things—things as they will be, and not as they are. It looks upon a beautiful face and sees but a grinning skull.

THE loveliest faces are to be seen by moonlight, when one sees half with the eye and half with the fancy.

DISEASES are merciful enough to come upon a man singly. Outward calamities generally come in throngs.

SOME fellows deposit all their money inside their vests in the form of victuals and drink, and call that *investing* it.

INK is the blood that flows in the veins of Thought—let for the health of sanguine lovers and poets.

TO mash a troublesome creditor's nose is not the most commendable mode of effecting the settlement of his bill.

IF Necessity, the mother of Invention, is also the mother of inventors, she has a very large family of starving children.

WHEN we have been long accustomed to doing anything, we never do it consciously for the last time without sadness of heart.

WHEN a memorable love has been followed by a memorable bereavement, no true heart would forget the love to cancel the woe.

A POOR poet, rather than continue to scribble, should hang his harp on the limb of a tree—with his neck caught in the strings.

TO a lover, there are but two places in all the world—one where his sweetheart is and the other where she isn't.

THE leaves die of chills and fever generally—sometimes it is the scarlet fever and sometimes and most always yellow fever.

IF a man is more polite and kind in other people's houses than at home, his wife should take good care never to let him feel at home.

IF only souls were counted instead of bodies, we fear the census returns of most cities would be rather beggarly.

THE weather may be dark and rainy; very well—laugh between the drops and think cheerily of the blue sky and sunshine that will surely come to-morrow.

MOST tragic actors, however anxious to make a sensation, would rather see the tiers full of eyes than the eyes full of tears.

MANY bad people would be less dangerous if they had not some goodness.

GENIUS is health and strength, not disease and weakness; it is sanity and virtue, not insanity and vice.

THE spirit of the teacher often neutralizes the spirit of the teaching.

THE most serious business of a great many people is never to seem serious.

WE are afraid that most of the milk now-a-days, although *pumped*, won't answer.

KINDNESS is a language which the dumb can speak and the deaf can understand.

ALL people are fond of salt, but Lot was wedded to it.

AN arch young lady should be an archer, for she can bend her beau as she pleases.

A SWEET but unrefined young woman should be sent to a sugar refinery.

IF you wish to keep your enemies from knowing any harm of you, don't let your friends know any.

SOME men's minds are so badly tumbled that they can't be made up.

HOPE is true riches; fear is real poverty.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A GERMAN in St. Louis got into a rage against a man who cut up his billiard table, and drawing a pistol threatened to shoot him, but in flourishing the weapon it hit against a chair and went off, the ball shattering the German's left hand; this only increased his anger, and he could not be cooled down sufficiently to have his wounds dressed, until thirty glasses of lager bier had been administered to him.

A FARMER who sold and received pay for a drove of hogs, in Cincinnati, recently, soon after met a "confidence man," who, seeing the farmer's well stuffed pocket-book, bet him $20 that he could whisk it out of his hand with a small strap; he did whisk it out, and decamped with it before the astonished victim could take any step to regain the pocket-book, or detain the sharper.

FIVE young children, living in Steuben, Me., set themselves on fire in the house, while their mother was at the barn milking the cows. Hearing their screams, the mother rushed to the house, and succeeded in saving four of the children; but the eldest (eight years of age) was burned to death, not a bit of her clothing being left unconsumed.

A BALTIMORE paper states that a young woman of that city, "who has become tired of life," was found in the street one evening not long ago, suffering from a dose of laudanum, (it being her second attempt to destroy herself,) from the fatal effect of which she was rescued, much against her will.

A CALATHUMPIAN party, in a village in Maine, having annoyed a new-married couple with their unearthly din for nearly half a night, the bridegroom at last took a gun, and firing into the crowd, wounded the musician who played the big tin pan on the pan of his knee, and silenced the din.

A RESPECTABLE married man, living in Philadelphia, suddenly assaulted his wife one evening recently, and tried to choke her to death. Her cries brought assistance, and it being found that her husband was laboring under an attack of insanity, he was taken to a lunatic asylum.

TWO little children, whose parents reside near San Francisco, who had gone out, as they said, "to look for papa," strayed off into the woods and got lost; after much anxious searching for, they were found lying under a bush, fast asleep, and cuddled in each other's arms.

A WESTERN clergyman, who was visiting his brother in Massachusetts, lately, was robbed by the latter and an accomplice, of one hundred and seventy dollars, and the money being found on them, they were committed to prison.

A MAN who seemed to be out of his mind, rose from the supper table at the Battle House in Mobile, one evening recently, and jumped from the window, and his head coming violently in contact with a stone step, his skull was fractured, and he died in half an hour.

A DRUNKEN man, living in Philadelphia, on going home the other evening, fell down near his own house, and fractured his skull so badly that he died before morning.

A TANNER, living in London, C. W., who had been engaged in tanning the hides of cows that had been bitten by a mad dog, was himself recently attacked with hydrophobia, and died of the terrible malady.

THE driver of a dray, in New Orleans, who willfully ran over a little boy in the street, and injured him so that he died, has been committed to prison on an indictment for murder.

THREE brothers, living in Kentucky, named Jesse, William, and Russell Hill, were set upon one night not long ago by a murderous gang, and all butchered in their beds.

A LADY named Robinson, residing at Portland, Ky., accidentally set her clothes on fire one morning not long since, and was burned so dreadfully that she soon died, in great agony.

IT is stated that there is a young woman in the Detroit jail, who was imprisoned for stealing five dollars from one lover, to pay a minister for marrying her to another.

A man who was turned out of a stage by the driver, on the overland route to California, has sued the company for $20,000 damages.

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, Editor and Proprietor.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1861.

Our Only Terms.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies $6; eight copies, $12. Postmasters and others who get up clubs can afterwards add single copies at $1.50. The party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free*. Terms, invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. Canada subscribers must send twenty-six cents in addition to the subscription, to pay the American postage, which is half a cent a copy on every paper. The notes of all specie-paying banks taken at par. When a draft or check can conveniently be sent, it will be preferred, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. ☞ We employ no travelling agents.

◆

The Cause of the Enormous and Unparalleled Circulation of the Ledger.—We pay more money for contributions by popular and eminent writers, in order to make a great and good paper, than is paid by any ten other literary papers in the country; and, as a legitimate result, our circulation is larger than the combined circulation of any ten others.

◆

We always stop the **Ledger** at the expiration of the year, or the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue, it it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time expires.

◆

No Travelling Agents.—We employ no travelling agents. If any party pretends to act as such you can put him down as a swindler.

◆

We cannot change the address of a subscriber, unless he gives us his *former*, as well as his present address.

◆

Rejected Manuscripts.—We will not return rejected manuscripts.

AS WE WALK ALONG.

The world is full of useful information, and no person of active mind can travel far over any part of its surface without learning something that is good for him to know. There is no institution for the diffusion of knowledge like the social system of which we all form a part, with its varied interests, its occupations, characters, achievements, failures, and every-day history acted before our eyes. The man who can walk through Broadway, on any day of the year, without receiving an impression capable of being turned to good account either on his own behalf or that of his fellow men, is little better than a dolt. The streets of a city constitute a museum of inestimable value to observing eyes and thinking heads. The specimens of utilitarian and ornamental art, of inventive genius, of scientific discovery and adaptation, of skill and dexterity in almost every department of human labor, exposed to view in the windows of the stores, constitute an ever open volume of information for the people, that he who runs may read. But he must not run too fast. It will pay him to pause now and then and make inquiries as he goes along, even when in full chase of the golden game we are all supposed to be pursuing. For even in a walk from Union Square to Wall street, he may gather knowledge that will help him to make a shorter cut to his object. All discoveries and inventions are suggestive. A new labor-saving machine may not be applicable to your special purpose, but the pinciple upon which it works may be capable of being otherwise applied. Inquire about it. Don't be ashamed to question the inventor. His explanations may give you a hint that you can improve at your leisure. At any rate his conversation will set you thinking, and something valuable generally comes of earnest, well-directed thought. We have known a man to lay the foundation of a fortune by gazing into a mechanician's window, and afterwards spending five minutes in conversation with the mechanician himself. Inquiring eyes, quick ears and a questioning tongue, are the *atennæ* through which the human insect acquires practical knowledge as it moves along. Its brains would be of no more use without them than a head of steam without an engine.

There are lessons in trade, in social and political economy, in moral philosophy, in almost everything pertaining to the business of life, to be learned in the streets. There the great principle of mutual and reciprocal dependence, of community of interests, is illustrated and rendered self-evident. There we are taught the necessity of mutual forbearance, of mutual courtesy, of mutual charity. There we learn the value of honesty, brotherhood, sympathy, and see the consequences of fraud, selfishness, and uncharitableness. It imports us to lay such lessons to heart and to apply them in great things as well as small.

In the country, however sparsely populated, the same general lessons are inculcated, though thay may not be brought home with the same emphatic force to the business and bosoms of the community.

◆

THE PEKIN PLUNDER.

The Emperor of China is a ruined man. All his personal effects, even to his last silk petticoat of the "dragon pattern," have been seized for debt by his inexorable creditors, France and England. His wives have also been rendered destitute. They have nothing to wear. Their little gold embroidered slippers have all been seized by the late outside, but now *inside* barbarians, and for anything we know, they may have been compelled to betake themselves to the *steppes* of Tartary without shoes. The very goldleaf with which they were accustomed to gild their teeth has been stolen. As to the Emperor, he has not a throne to sit upon. His palace, at the last accounts, was as bare of furniture as an Irish shanty after an "eviction." It is distracting, especially to ladies, to read of the way in which magnificent silks were twisted into ropes by the Frendh soldiers, and fans and furbelows not to be had in Broadway for love or money, were ruthlessly tied up in bundles, and piled in great heaps in the imperial chambers. It will be impossible to iron the creases out of the brocades stiff with threads of gold, in which the troopers bagged their plunder. China nick-nacks will be plenty as blackberries soon, in Paris and London, and will doubtless be sold almost for a song. It would be a good speculation to bring a ship load or so to New York. Fans from the Imperial harem would be quite the rage for the opera, and mandarins' buttons would be apropos of the present style of trimming ladies dresses and cloaks. Silks of the "dragon pattern" would unquestionably meet with a ready sale, and a New York belle, illuminated with embroidered monsters, would be a charming sight. Let us have a consignment of the Pekin plunder as soon as possible.

◆

THE PUBLIC PULSE.

The beatings of the public pulse are powerfully influenced by the public press. The newspapers can at any time throw all classes of the community into a state of feverish excitement and seriously disturb the course of trade. A paragraph in a prominent journal, may make a difference of millions in the value of public stocks, or of a great staple, and the hasty, unadvised shedding of a little ink may cause the shedding of much blood. It is therefore a *crime* to permit inflammatory rumors to find vent through the columns of the newspapers. A vast responsibility rests upon daily journalists—a responsibility as great, perhaps, as that of the head of a nation. It is the duty of the former to sift thoroughly the reports which reach them by telegraph, mail and word of mouth, to publish nothing on mere hearsay, in all cases to abstain from violent language and to present such harsh truths as they may be called upon to chronicle accompanied by comments tending to allay excitement. Their tone in all important emergencies should be hopeful, conciliatory and christian. If the waters are troubled it should be the duty of the public press to pour oil upon them, not to lash them into fury. No man who cannot control his passions, his prejudices, his antipathies, who cannot abnegate self for the common good—whose impulses are too strong for his reason,—should *presume* to edit a daily newspaper. He is not fit for it. He is as dangerous in the editor's chair, as a firebrand would be in a magazine; as incompetent to the task of journalism as a drunken man would be to manage a locomotive at the head of a crowded train. Unfortunately, inconsiderate editors are not more uncommon than fool-hardy engineers.

◆

THE FOOD OF OUR FARMERS.

Our contemporaries in the West are discoursing upon the subject of indigestion. They announce a very curious and unexpected fact. The particular victims of this complaint, they assure us, are not the scholars, the clergymen or the merchants, but the *farmers*, a class of men who, in all climes and times, have been supposed to surpass other men in digestive power. It was in deference to their supposed ability to digest, that our forefathers bestowed upon the votaries of agriculture the name of chawbacon. The old comedies and satires abound in passages that show how universal the belief formerly was that a farmer, whatever other talent or accomplishment he might lack, could always digest his dinner. It was reserved for this age and country to produce a dyspeptic farmer.

Opinions differ as to the causes of this effect defective. Some say it comes of bolting meals in ten minutes; others, that it is caused by continuous pork; others, that it arises from a want of recreation. Unquestionably, bolting is injurious. Doubtless, pork, like other good creatures, may be abused. Certainly, all work and no play is good for neither man nor boy. We also have an idea on this subject, which we now proceed to promulgate to an indigestive generation.

"What did you miners eat?" we asked once of a returned Californian. "Pancakes," was the reply. "And why pancakes?" we continued. "Because we could make them in ten minutes," said he. These pancakes, our friend proceeded to explain, were nothing more than fried masses of damp flour and greasy salt pork, spluttered together in a frying-pan till they were supposed to be "done." Now, the farmers of the West do not live on fried lumps of greasy flour, but this little Californian fact is the key to unlock the mystery of their indigestion.

The most intensely busy family in the world is one that settles in a new country to convert a tract of prairie, or a piece of primeval forest, into a productive farm and a civilized home. Everything has to be done at once. There is a demand for every fibre of muscle, and every minute of time. The business of cooking has to be done with the utmost possible dispatch, and those viands are necessarily chosen which are most easily kept on hand and which can be prepared with the least expenditure of time. The frying-pan, unfortunately, is at once the most pernicious and the most quickly available of all the implements of cooking, and the frying-pan, therefore, in the kitchens of new countries, reigns supreme. The whole art of cookery is gradually lost by mere disuse. Things that can be quickly cooked, alone are used. Hot biscuits and buckwheat cakes take the place of good old-fashioned bread; and instead of joints of well-cooked meat, slices of gross and indigestible pork are served up, morning, noon and night, for three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. In time this will tell upon the best constitution. Children suffer from it to such a degree, that they are swept off by new and nameless diseases.

Hasty cooking does the mischief. Girls who have grown up upon this extemporized diet, do not learn to prepare any other, and must needs continue the same system. Worse than this, the palate itself becomes so depraved, that people turn away with loathing from good, plain, honest, wholesome meat and bread, and actually *prefer* the greasy pancakes, the horrid fried pork, the saleratus biscuit, to which they have been accustomed. The art of cookery must be restored to our farm-houses before we can rear a race of healthy, robust, clear-complexioned, sound-toothed men and women.

◆

ANSWER IT TO YOURSELVES.

We want to ask mothers a question. Do you treat your daughters as friends and companions? Do you know what they are mostly thinking about from day to day? These may seem curious questions to ask a *mother*; and yet how many who now know no worse agony than to hear the word "mother," will tell you that it was for want of this knowledge of their daily thoughts and feelings on the part of her who carefully attended to their clothes, food and drink, *and then thought her duty done*, that they are not this hour her joy and pride. Mothers, never be content with knowing your daughter's outward life. Never be content unless you know that there is no thought, no feeling she would be *afraid* to tell you. There is something wrong in the relation, when a mother is so severe or so rigid a censor that a daughter timidly closes the door of her inmost soul at her approach.

◆

A RECIPE FOR CONTENTMENT.

Try to compute your *artificial wants*—the number of things which you fancy come under the list of *must have's*, merely because other people possess them, and not because you would not be quite as well off and as happy in their absence. Try it for one week, whenever your fingers are tempted to dally with your purse strings. Record in your memorandum book what in view of this you sensibly resolve *not* to buy, and see what a nice little sum will be left you for *real* necessaries. It is seldom by these last that one is hampered and annoyed. Make the experiment, and see if it is not so. A just economy is not niggardliness; one need not be a miser in avoiding the extravagance of a spendthrift.

◆

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITIES.

How lamentable that we should go through the world so misunderstanding one another; letting slip golden opportunities for glimpses into men's *better* nature, which might have knit our heart to theirs forever in a brotherhood of love, and drawn the veil of charity over faults which, in our blindness, seemed to us without a virtue to balance them. Angels turn sorrowing away from this soul-blindness of ours, and fiends laugh over the final fall of despair which our helping hand might at such moments have averted. Well for us all it is that He who is Himself without sin, more merciful than man, sees gathering tears in eyes that *we* deem hard and dry.

LEISURE HOURS.

BY EDWARD EVERETT.

No. Fourteen.

WEST AND EAST.

In the last number of these papers, I spoke of the mighty "journeyings" during the year through the realms of space. They form, it is true, an appropriate subject for serious meditation, at the close of the year, and they elevate our conceptions of the unutterable grandeur of the system, around which the earth and its inhabitants are annually borne. But for all the practical and moral relations of man, those events which involve his own powers of will and action, on the little planet where his lot is cast, are of infinitely greater concernment. The opportune arrival or the delay of an expected ship; a fortnight of sunshine, or a blast from the North East, when the wheat fields are in the milk; a victory or a defeat in the Tauric Chersonesus or the malarious swamps of Lombardy; the publication of a book, the utterance of a speech, the conception of a wise thought in a powerful mind, are of more direct interest to living men and women, than, all the radiant portents of the solar system. Nay, we may go further and assert that the phenomena of the intellectual and moral world, even as displayed in the action of a single rational being, are not merely relatively, but absolutely of greater importance than the mightiest masses and grandest movements of inanimate matter. Pope truly said:

> "An honest man's the noblest work of God."

A mind is a grander creation than a planet; a truth is a brighter luminary than a sun.

Weighed in this balance of moral appreciation, the events of the year as they have occurred under our eyes or within our knowledge, are not beneath our notice, even in comparison with the great cosmical movements of the system, of which our earth forms a part. Indeed, the contributions of the year 1860 to the history of the world, will, in all human probabilty, fill a memorable pages in the annals of civilization. This year will exhibit an unusual number of those national movements,—an unwonted intensity of those imperial forces,—by which the great families of our race act and react upon each other, and perform the gorgeous drama of History, with continents for the stage, and races of men for the actors, and languages, dynasties, arts, laws, in a word civilizations, for the plot.

It will be found, on the survey of the Chronicle of the past year, that, in three or four important localities,—in fact through half the circuit of the globe,—the dominating power and influence of what we call the Caucasian race, with its inventive, ambitious, organizing, creative, Western intellect, has been brought into contact, more frequently into collision, with the degenerate and exhausted East. That struggle which has been going on for the two thousand years which have elapsed since Alexander the great led his phalanx to the banks of the Indus, has never been pushed with greater vigor than during the past year, nor to all appearance, with greater effect on the inferior races. About two centuries and a half ago, the British power in India commenced in a feeble germ of commercial adventure. It grew, by the indolent tolerance of the effeminate princes, whose luxury was gratified by the ministry of Western art; whose arms were strengthened by the skill of renegade engineers; whose diplomacy was conducted with European method and craft. Thus it crept up from the factory at the swampy mouths of the rivers, to the metropolitan bazaar; from the market-place to the camp; from the camp to the throne; from two or three scattered seaports to great provinces; from tributary kingdoms to a subject Empire. Races of men that were civilized while the naked Britons painted themselves with woad and lurked in the primeval forest,—dynasties founded or consolidated by Tamerlane and Aurungzebe, were overturned by Robert Clive and Richard Colley Wellesley; till a company of merchants in Leadenhall street, London, gave the law to a hundred and fifty millions from Cape Cormorin to the Himalaya mountains. I once asked a very intelligent and highly cultivated Hindoo, how it happened that the British East India Company, with a force comparatively so small at its command, could hold in subjection such an extensive country and such a vast population. He answered, "Because they give us a better government than we or our fathers have ever enjoyed, either under our native Hindoo rulers, or the Mahometan princes, who have reigned over us by the right of conquest." This was probably true, but it was a part only of the truth. The British rulers of India relied much on the skill with which they played off against each other the mutual jealousies and feuds of their Hindoo and Mahometan subjects and those of the less civilized races, that believe neither in Mahomet or Brahma. But still more they relied, and were safe in relying, on Europeon drill, discipline, artillery, and finance,—rifles against matchlocks, cannon against elephants, and gallant officers carving their way to peerages by the sword, against petticoated nabobs reluctantly leaving their zenanas for the field; in a word, they relied on the superior endurance, skill, bull-dog courage, and proof blood of the European race.

But the arts by which conquests are made, and power gained, are not identical with those by which subject millions are held to their allegiance. Security creates negligence, and conscious power sometimes forgets that an insult cuts deeper than a scourge. Three years ago, exhorbitant taxation cruelly levied,—the insolent demeanor of fledgling officers,—thoughtless trifling with cherished superstitions, combined with the dormant ambitions of dynasties degenerate but not extinct, roused the torpid sensibilities of the Anglo-Indian princes, armies, and peoples, and shook the British power to its basis. For a few weeks the mutiny spread from regiment to regiment; the flames of revolt caught from province to province; and a war of extermination raged. Horrors were perpetrated of which the narrative curdles the blood. Every mail brought the news that a garrison was massacred, a city sacked, a tributary kingdom wrested from its allegiance. But the Anglo-Saxon heart did not quail; feeble garrisons, beleaguered by hosts outnumbering them a hundred fold, stood firm; troops on their way to China were detained in India for a more urgent service; reinforcements were crowded forward from the West; Sir Colin Campbell received his appointment one day, and the next day was on his way from Scotland to India; and in two campaigns the mutiny was crushed. For the two succeeding years the fire broke out here and there,—like a lurid flame from the smouldering ruins of a great conflagration; but within a few months the dying embers have been extinguished,—and the former territories of the East India Company, now placed under the immediate government of the Crown, are probably held by as safe a tenure as any of its other Colonial possessions. Let us hope that the inauguration of a policy more favorable to the introduction of European civilization will take the place of that which aimed only at the extension and maintenance of European power. Hopeful steps in this direction have already been taken.

In the meantime a still more startling act in the great historical drama has been performed in China. This immense empire, comprising, by the most moderate calculation, a third part of the human race, had, till the present generation, resisted far more completely than India, the encroachments of Western arts, Western power, and Western ideas. A very extensive and mutually beneficial commerce had been contumeliously restricted to the muddy banks of the outlet of the Canton river; one single Portuguese settlement was tolerated on the main land; the most offensive peculiarities of Chinese municipal law were rigidly enforced against foreigners, I refer to the exaction of life for life, even in the case of purely accidental homicide; all peaceful ingress into the country forbidden to "outside barbarians," and their ambassadors subjected to hardships and insults worse than hardships, within which semi-barbarous governments absurdly fancy they entrench their dignity; forgetting that courtesy and gentleness are some of the surest characteristics of power. A spirit of resistance against this anti-social system had for a generation been growing up in the West. After the termination of the monopoly enjoyed by the British East India Company in the Chinese trade, the idea began to prevail that China must be brought to acknowledge the law of Nations, as understood and practiced by the Western powers. England began the struggle in the opium war. The ulterior principle of the contest was sound, the immediate pretext was execrable. Mr. John Quincy Adams maintained that the exclusive system of the Chinese and their refusal to acknowledge the law of Nations, as observed by the civilized world, were a justifiable cause of war. This war has been waged with fluctuating fortunes, but in the main with success, for more than twenty years. Foreign commerce has been admitted by treaty to the principal northern ports;—a British Colony has been established in front of Canton; that great commercial capital has been captured; seventy British war steamers were seen in 1842, in the Yang-tse-Kiang; fresh regiments from Yorkshire were landed in midsummer in the latitude of Charleston and defeated the Tartar armies. Not sufficiently taught by these chastisements, the Chinese have provoked a new war, and within a few weeks the palace of their emperor has been sacked and a French and English army encamped on the walls of Pekin. When we read of the infernal tortures inflicted upon the prisoners of the allied armies—some of them non-combatants—cruelties of which the recital almost makes one faint, we feel the soundness of Mr. Adams's principle. The rule over a third part of mankind of a semi-barbarous power, under which such atrocities are but an ordinary feature of war, cannot longer be tolerated. The sentiment of the civilized world revolts against it. One could wish the lesson of humanity had been taught by gentler instructors than field trains of rifled cannon and the sacking of imperial residences; but the surgery must be in proportion to the depth and malignity of the ulcer.

We cannot doubt that the final result will be favorable to the cause of humanity, and the advancement of civilization. One consequence of the recent Anglo-French expedition and the occupation of the capital is very likely to be the eventual overthrow of the dominant Tartar race, which, it is well known, has been established on the throne of China for less than three centuries. The ignominious defeat of its armies, coupled with the spread of the rebellion that has so long been eating into the vitals of the empire, may result in the complete subversion of the Tartar rule, and the restoration of the indigenous race to power. We hardly know as yet what dependence can be placed on the reported adoption by the rebels of some of the elementary ideas of the Christian faith, but it can scarcely be doubted that they will be found more receptive of western ideas than their Mantchoo rulers.

Indeed, the tendency of the Chinese mind, in that direction was felt and acknowledged twenty years ago. I was informed by Sir Henry Pottinger, who negotiated the treaty with China after the war of 1842, that it was left discretionary with him, by his government, whether to exchange the ratifications at Canton, or to insist on doing it at Pekin. He had conducted the negotiations with Key-ing, (advantageously known to our own diplomacy,) and had formed so favorable an opinion of the integrity and discretion of Key-ing, that he determined to consult him on the expediency of exchanging the ratifications at Pekin. Key-ing dissuaded it, telling Sir Henry that, of course, if he insisted upon it, the Chinese government, just coming out of an unsuccessful war, could not refuse their consent; but that it would grate very much on the national sentiment to see a British Embassy entering the Metropolis of the Empire, the approaches to which were guarded with such jealousy. "Wait twenty years," he added, "and the road to Pekin will be as open to you as the road to London."

The progress of foreign intercourse has not been so rapid as Key-ing predicted, and the road to Pekin has been opened in a somewhat harsher manner than he foresaw; but opened it has been, and will not again be shut.

We are led by an easy transition from the conflict of the Asiatic and European civilizations, on the western shores of the Pacific, to that which has been waged contemporaneously, on a much smaller scale, but with no little significance, upon the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, for we are told that the English war in China has attracted much of the attention of the Druses in Syria, who connect it, in some mystical way, with the obscure superstitions of their tribe. The recent tragedies in Mount Lebanon and the neighboring region are too familiar to the American public, and have excited too wide a sympathy, to need to be described in this paper. Their most important feature, in reference to our present line of remark, is the inability of the Turkish government, without foreign aid, to secure its Christian subjects in the enjoyment of the toleration, which has been of late years reluctantly granted to them, and the consequent call upon the navy of Great Britain and the army of France, to aid the Sultan in protecting them from the fanatical rage of their enemies. This, as far as I recollect, is the first time in which the friendly interference of the Christian powers, in the ordinary administration of affairs, has been tolerated, not to say invited by the Ottoman government. The Crimean war was of an entirely different character; it was a war of the Western powers of Europe against the ambitious movements of Russia. It awakens deep thought on the strange complications of human affairs, to see the liberated Algerian chieftain, Abd-el-Kader (long a state prisoner in France, in violation of the conditions on which he capitulated) extending to the defenceless Christians of Damascus that protection which the government of the country could not or would not afford them.

Meantime, oppressed as they are, and constantly exposed to these fatal outbreaks of fanatical violence, exasperated by all the bitterness of border hatred among the neighboring tribes which belong to different national stocks, the Christian subjects of the Turkish Empire, amounting in the aggregate to twelve millions of the Greek faith alone, with perhaps a fourth as many Armenians, Maronites, and Nestorians, are the legitimate representatives of the civilization of Europe, and will no doubt eventually prove the agents of its extension throughout Western Asia. They form the bond of union with the great European powers, which gives a pretence of principle, if no more, to the wars of European interest and ambition. It is but sixty years since, whenever a war with a European state broke out, its ambassadors were thrown into prison in the seven towers of Constantinople. At the present day the costume of Europe has been adopted by the Sultan and his army; the young Turks, candidates for political employment, are sent to London and Paris for their education; the treasury of the Sultan is kept from collapsing by English capital; and the integrity of the Empire is preserved only by the impossibility of uniting the great powers in the division of its spoils. A time will come, and that probably before long, when this obstacle will vanish.

Interesting points of contact, between the Western and Eastern element, are found in the recent history of the Barbary coast; for though in mere geographical position, the Northern shores of Africa lie, not on the East, but on the South of Europe, their civilization,—if it may be called by that name,—is entirely of the Oriental type. At the commencement of this century, the forts, the public works, and the gallies of the Barbary powers were filled with Christian slaves, some of them citizens of the United States. The rival powers of Europe were even mean enough to connive at the havoc made by the corsairs of Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis on each other's commerce. The foundations of the American navy were laid in the determination of the United States to resist the scandalous necessity of subsidising these petty sea-rovers, and some of the first blows at their power were struck by Preble and Decatur. Within the last thirty years France has appropriated to herself the noble kingdom of Algeria, and Spain has just returned from a victorious campaign in Morocco; while Great Britain is steadily pushing a civilized rule northward from the Cape of Good Hope, toward the central regions of this benighted continent.

But the most successful conquest achieved by the civilization of the West over the jealous and anti-social system of the East, has been that which has recently opened a communication between the Japanese Empire and the rest of mankind;—a bloodless conquest, initiated by the enlightened policy of the government of the United States. Japan, still more than China, was shut out from intercourse with the world. A vast commerce of all civilized nations centered at Canton; but a few Dutch ships alone were allowed to visit Nagasaki, and those on conditions alike onerous and humiliating. Chains and starvation awaited the mariner shipwrecked on the coast of Japan; and all applications for the most needful supplies for our vessels were met with an insolent refusal. Bitter and revengeful traditions of ancient interference by foreigners with the domestic politics and religion of Japan, had steeled the hearts of Rulers and People against the laws of hospitality and the common charities of life. With the acquisition and growth of California, and the increase of our navigation in the North Pacific, it became of great importance that we should obtain friendly admission into the ports of the Japanese Empire. An expedition was fitted out under Mr. Fillmore's administration, and by the firmness and discretion of Commodore Perry brought, in a single season, to a successful result. No cities were bombarded; no summer palaces "looted;" no prisoners subjected to tortures worse than death; not a gun fired but in a friendly salute. The sealed doors of the Empire were, by the peaceful enginery of negotiation, burst open for all mankind, and the year 1860 will be ever memorable as that of a solemn Embassy conveyed in an American frigate, from the most jealous and exclusive of the Oriental despotisms, to this far distant Western hemisphere.

◆

READING STORIES.

To the Editor of the New York Ledger:—I have taken the liberty of writing to you about something that took place in our Seminary the other day. The Professor of Belles Lettres, in speaking upon the subject of "light literature," submitted to us for consideration the question, "Is fiction beneficial?" and the next day called upon our class for an answer. This led to quite a discussion, during which the **Ledger** was referred to in a friendly and complimentary manner, and this it was that made me think that perhaps you would like to hear about it. Our Professor summed up the whole discussion in a speech that I should like to give you *verbatim*, but as I cannot do that, I will give you the substance of it. He began by saying that some time ago he had the misfortune to listen to a long, dull lecture, which sent a large number of the audience to sleep; but toward the close of the performance, the lecturer succeeded, for about three minutes, in getting the earnest attention of the whole house. Every eye was upon him, every mind intent, every boy and girl awake. At the end of the three minutes, the congregation relapsed into languor and inattention, and remained in that condition to the close. What was the cause of this oasis of interest in a desert of dullness? Young ladies, said our Professor, the lecturer employed those three minutes *in telling a story!* The comment which I privately made upon this incident was the following: How universal among mankind is the love of stories! And this is my first and chief reason for believing in the utility of fiction—the universal appetite for it. The story-teller is everywhere a welcome guest. I hold it to be a truth almost self-evident, that nature implants in the heart of man no desire, the gratification of which, in a lawful and moderate manner, is injurious.

"I am also of the opinion," the professor went on to say, "that the person who, in this age of the world, wholly refrains from the reading of fiction, deprives himself of the advantages resulting from familiar intercourse with the brightest spirits of the times, most of whom now choose to communicate to mankind their wisdom, their wit, their good feeling, in the form of stories. To the novelists of the present generation, who can express the debt we owe? How many millions are daily cheered and civilized by them! What follies have they laughed us out of! What abuses have they caused to be reformed! What benign feelings have they diffused! With what awful vividness and power have they depicted the consequences of false ideas, of mis-education, of vice, of bigotry, of parental indulgence and unwise restraint! How pleasantly have they revealed to us the opposite results of good sense and good humor! You can tell in five minutes' talk with a man, whether he freshens his soul in the flowing stream of modern fiction, or stands like a churl on its banks, reviling the healthy, merry crowd who are sporting in the revivifying waters."

The Professor said a good deal more in this vein, but as I can't remember it so as to do him justice, I will not attempt to report it. I hope that what I have sent will repay you for the trouble of perusing it, and you can print it if you choose. The **Ledger** is a great favorite in our Seminary. Respectfully yours,

A Pupil of ——— Seminary.

◆

"The Mute Singer," by Anna Cora Ritchie, now publishing in the **Ledger**, is exciting a degree of enthusiasm among our readers such as seldom greets the advent of any story.

ONE OF MANY.

BY ALICE CARY.

I knew a man—I know him still
  In part, in all I ever knew,
Whose life runs counter to his will
  Leaving the things he fain would do,

Undone. His hopes are shapes of sands
  That cannot with themselves agree;
As one whose eager, outstretched hands
  Take hold on water—so is he.

Fame is a bauble, to his ken—
  Mirth cannot move his aspect grim—
The holidays of other men,
  Are only battle days, to him.

He locks his heart within his breast,
  Believing life to such as he,
Is but a change of ills, at best—
  A crossed and crazy tragedy.

His cheek is wan—his limbs are faint
  With fetters which they never wore—
No wheel that ever crushed a saint,
  But breaks *his* body o'er and o'er.

Though woman's grace he never sought
  By tender look, or word of praise,
He dwells upon her, in his thought,
  With all a lover's lingering phrase.

A very martyr to the truth,
  All that's best in him is belied—
Humble, yet proud withal—in sooth
  His pride is his disdain of pride.

He sees in what he does amiss
  A continuity of ill;
The next life dropping out of this,
  Stained with its many colors, still.

His kindliest pity is for those
  Who are the slaves of guilty lusts,
And virtue, shining till it shows
  Another's frailty, he distrusts.

Nature, he holds, since time began
  Has been reviled—misunderstood—
And that we first must love a man
  To judge him—be he bad or good.

Often his path is crook'd and low,
  And is so in his own despite,
For still the path he meant to go
  Runs straight, and level with the right.

No heart has he to strive with fate
  For less things than our great men gone
Achieved, who, with their single weight,
  Turned time's slow wheels a century on.

His waiting silence is his prayer—
  His darkness is his plea for light,
And loving all men everywhere,
  He lives, a more than anchorite.

O friends, if you this man should see,
  Be not your scorn too hardly hurled;
Believe me, whatsoe'r he be,
  There be more like him in the world.

* * *

MOSES ORAN;

OR,

"THE BURGLARS' NEST."

BY GEO. CLARENCE BLANCHARD.

CHAPTER XIII.

OSBORNE TAKEN BY SURPRISE!

Our hero wended his way back to the "Nest" on the day on which he entered into the compact with Colin, in a happier frame of mind than he had felt since his introduction. The prospect of carying out his long-cherished projects, quickened his steps, and thrilled his soul with generous emotions. As we have before mentioned, Osborne had a natural taste for excitement and adventure, and stimulated by the thought that he was to be the instrument of bringing to light a mystery of so many years' standing, he stopped not to consider the risk, or weigh the responsibility. His restless, ardent temperament rejoiced in it, and he longed for the moment when he could, with his friend, rush upon the astonished ruffians, and annihilate them at a single blow.

Thus thinking, and thus turning over in his mind the incident of the day, Osborne dashed along through the woods, unconscious that, in the intensity of his thoughts, he was straying far from the regular path. It was some time ere he discovered his mistake, and he was then nearly five miles out of his way. No other course suggested itself but to retrace his steps, and inwardly blaming himself for his heedlessness, he turned back with all speed. The day was fast declining, and he knew to be late would at once create suspicion. Rapidly the stout-hearted youth pressed on—when, lo! could he believe his eyes—the terminus of the road was entirely new and strange to him! His consternation can be better imagined than described. He looked around; he examined the trees; he even mounted them, and from their dizzy elevation attempted to ascertain his true situation. It was in vain. He had evidently blundered in the "Devil's Nook," a locality that had been pointed out to him on several occasions by his comrades. His despairing gaze surveyed one dreary expanse of trees, and swamps, and dark ravines. There was not a single landmark that looked familiar. With a saddened heart he descended. It was natural that he should feel no small degree of apprehension on reflecting on the danger of his position. "At all events," thought the brave youth, "I will go straight ahead, and depend on Providence for the rest."

He accordingly started forward with renewed energy, but the further he proceeded the more intricate and mazy grew the woods. He was scrambling over a pile of dry brushwood, when his foot slipped, and he was precipitated with considerable violence down a steep embankment. He clutched wildly at the bushes, and fortunately saved himself from going to the bottom. Somewhat stunned and bruised, our hero regained his feet, and crawled up on the other side. He had lost his gun, but it did not much trouble him, as it was rather an encumbrance than otherwise. Cutting through the dense copse of brushwood, Osborne continued to pursue his way with unfaltering resolution. The day was far spent, and he almost despaired of effecting his escape from the gloomy labyrinth that seemed to environ him. Mounting a tree, once more he looked around. There was a solid abutment of rock bounding the prospect eastward, but evidently no outlet.

He was fairly lost in the woods. Hark! what is that breaking on the stillness of the forest? It is surely approaching footsteps! Osborne listened, and was satisfied that his ears had not deceived him. He was about to shout, but on a second consideration of the matter, he concluded to remain quiet, and see who it was.

Nearer and nearer came the tramp, louder and more defined the crashing of the bushes, till finally they were thrust aside, and out stepped—the Tomtit! Osborne instinctively grasped his pistol.

The burglar chief, unconscious of the presence of our hero, hastened onward. Hesitating no longer, Osborne dropped noiselessly from the tree, and closely kept on his trail. Where the Tomtit was going, he, of course, knew not, but, at all events, it would give him an opportunity of extricating himself from his present perilous situation. Stealthily he followed him, stopping when he stopped, and watching every movement with a lynx eye. The burglar chief was sometimes so near that Osborne could hardly restrain from shooting him on the spot. "What an opportunity of ridding the country of this famous scoundrel!" thought he; but at the same time he was impressed with the impolicy of an act which might mar his future schemes.

The burglar chief now struck into a new path, exceedingly narrow and intricate. Osborne hesitated at first to follow, but remembering his desperate situation, he continued to dodge at his heels, his hand still grasping his pistol, with the resolution of destroying him at once should he turn round and discover him.

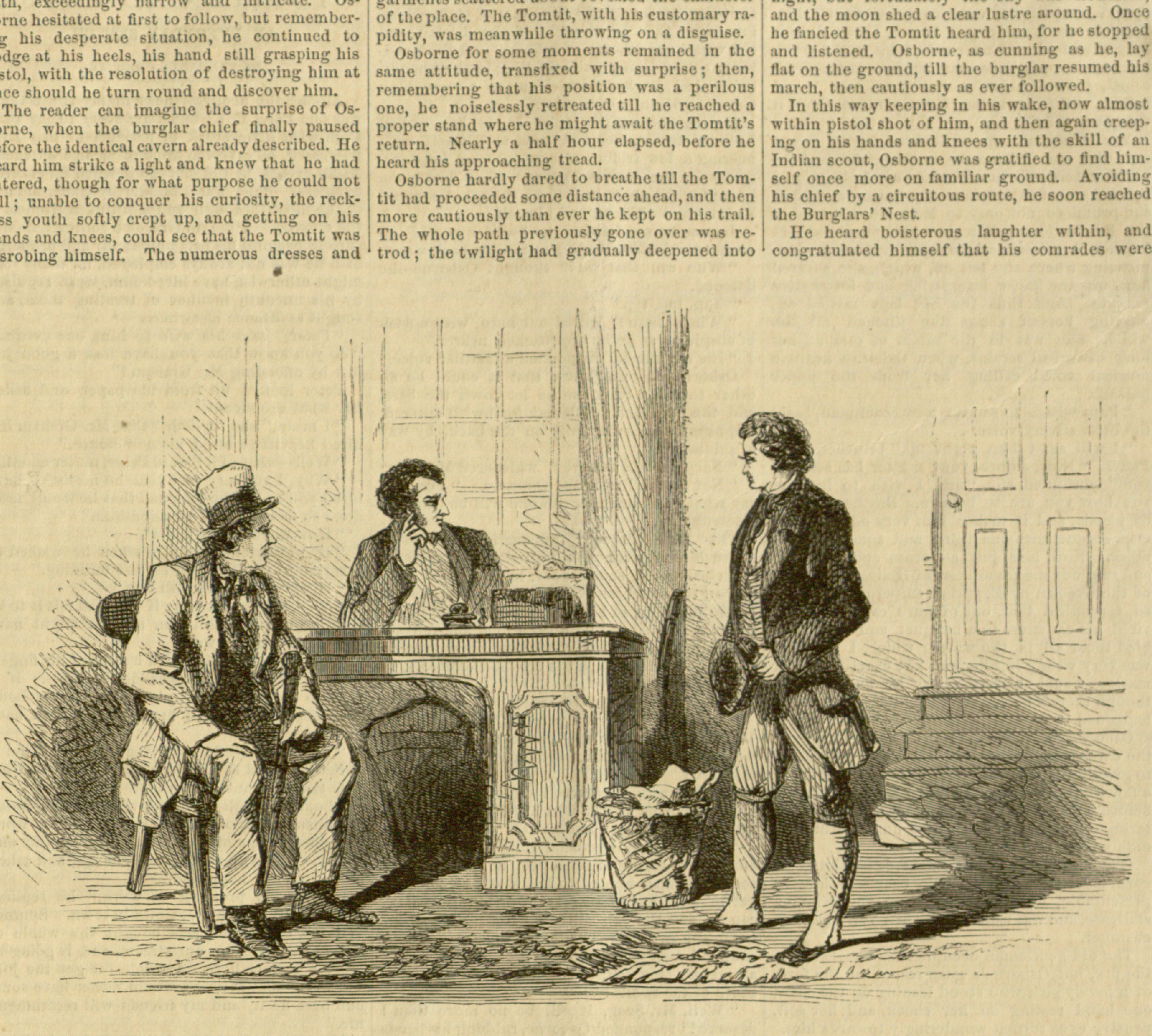
The reader can imagine the surprise of Osborne, when the burglar chief finally paused before the identical cavern already described. He heard him strike a light and knew that he had entered, though for what purpose he could not tell; unable to conquer his curiosity, the reckless youth softly crept up, and getting on his hands and knees, could see that the Tomtit was disrobing himself. The numerous dresses and garments scattered about revealed the character of the place. The Tomtit, with his customary rapidity, was meanwhile throwing on a disguise.

Osborne for some moments remained in the same attitude, transfixed with surprise; then, remembering that his position was a perilous one, he noiselessly retreated till he reached a proper stand where he might await the Tomtit's return. Nearly a half hour elapsed, before he heard his approaching tread.

Osborne hardly dared to breathe till the Tomtit had proceeded some distance ahead, and then more cautiously than ever he kept on his trail. The whole path previously gone over was retrod; the twilight had gradually deepened into night, but fortunately the sky was cloudless, and the moon shed a clear lustre around. Once he fancied the Tomtit heard him, for he stopped and listened. Osborne, as cunning as he, lay flat on the ground, till the burglar resumed his march, then cautiously as ever followed.

In this way keeping in his wake, now almost within pistol shot of him, and then again creeping on his hands and knees with the skill of an Indian scout, Osborne was gratified to find himself once more on familiar ground. Avoiding his chief by a circuitous route, he soon reached the Burglars' Nest.

He heard boisterous laughter within, and congratulated himself that his comrades were too far gone in their cups to notice and comment on his prolonged absence.



THE NEW COACHMAN.

Putting on a bold face, Osborne entered. He was correct in his surmises. The whole gang were uproarously drunk, and the room presented a picturesque and characteristic scene.

The pine table, with its contents of eatables, bottles and glasses, had been overset, and lay in an inverted position, from the centre of which protruded the legs of Mr. Snag. That gentleman, having vainly endeavored to regain his equilibrium, was making divers weak attempts to sing a comic song.

Mr. Molecat was scraping a violin with tipsy energy, and the rest of his comrades dancing, howling, and screeching like madmen.

Much relieved by this social state of affairs, Osborne quietly stepped up to his little attic. As he stretched himself on his pallet he thought of Colin, and thereupon began to cogitate, and plan out his future course. "Before two days," thought the exultant youth, "the 'Burglars' Nest' shall be unveiled to the world, and its ruffianly inmates safely secured." What a complication of incidents had led him to this place.

Worn out by his extraordinary ramble, he soon fell asleep. It seemed to him that he had been but a short time in the drowsy land of Nod before he was rather roughly awakened, and a voice in no very gentle tone directed him to get up.

"What for, Mr. Beg?" inquired Osborne, considerably surprised to find that gentleman was standing by him, with a flaring candle in one hand, and an armfull of clothes.

"You'll find out presently," rejoined Mr. Beg, throwing his bundle on the floor. "Up with you, and hurry on this rig. Come," he added, giving him another shake to restore animation, "it's the Tomtit's orders, and the quicker you mind 'em the better, do you hear?"

Stunned by this strange summons, Osborne mechanically arose and obeyed. What could it mean? He, however, dressed himself without saying a single word; he almost feared to ask Mr. Beg, for he half divined its purport.

Mr. Beg, after assisting him on with an overcoat, and handing him a cloth cap, gave a grunt expressive of his satisfaction, and then beckoned him to follow. They went down stairs and walked in solemn silence through the passage. The strong, gutteral snore from the many sleepers in the next room, could be heard alternating with the ticking of the clock. Everything else was perfectly quiet. Osborne had no time to indulge in speculations, for the adjoining apartment was softly pushed open, and he found himself alone in the presence of the Tomtit.

It would not have been so easy to have recognized the burglar chief at that moment, for he was thoroughly and completely disguised. But Osborne having seen him the day previous, knew him at once.

He was now a withered, bent old man; say a Quaker farmer, with his broad brimmed hat, cowskin boots, and leather leggins.

Osborne understood, and started in well affected astonishment.

"It's your chief," observed the Tomtit, motioning him to be seated.

With many misgivings that he was about to hear unwelcome news, Osborne silently sat down on a bench. The Tomtit followed his example with his stern eye rivetted on him.

"Young man," said he, "from your associates you have already heard that we are about to start on an expedition full of danger and responsibility."

Osborne replied that he had.

"Very good," rejoined the Tomtit, "that moment has arrived."

Osborne turned pale with chagrin and disappointment, but said nothing.

"That moment," continued the burglar chief, "has arrived, and before we commence our journey you shall understand what your duty is to be; now then, each man of my party has his separate and individual line of business; any shrinking, any remissness and they meet with the traitor's doom. You understand me?"

"Perfectly," replied Osborne, who having now given up all hopes of remaining at the Nest, listened with reckless apathy.

"Well then," pursued the Tomtit, "the part you are to play is not a whit more hazardous or dangerous than the rest will have to encounter. I have managed to get you a place as coachman in the house we intend to visit, for the express purpose of letting us in when the time comes. The thing might be done without all that trouble I fancy, but it wouldn't be half as convenient. Now listen; next Saturday week the job comes off; between two and three o'clock in the morning, or perhaps earlier, myself and the boys will be round. You will creep below, unbolt the back door, which leads, as you will find, out in a small brick yard; adjoining this is the stable; the bars you will let down the night previous, and there we will be all waiting. I have managed it so well that two trusty boys with myself will slip up into the old gentleman's chamber, and force open the closet, leaving the remainder down in the basement to keep a lookout; you in the meanwhile will stand over Van Cleeker's bed with a knife, prepared, in the event of his awakening, to run him through the heart; the box containing the treasure can easily be pryed open, and bags ready to empty it. Then we are off, and you will follow us as a matter of course back to the Nest, and so—what do you think of it?"

The Tomtit as he concluded this speech moved back with an air of expectancy, as though expecting some reply.

Osborne muttered that it seemed a very excellent plan.

"Well then," pursued the Tomtit, "I am thinking nothing could be managed better; as for your part, it is easy enough to fulfill; the others might do it as well, but your genteel face was some recommendation, and besides, our old boys might get on a spree, and blow themselves, and there's no trusting 'em when they are in liquor. All that you've got to do is to keep quiet and hold your tongue; and now, Mr. Pluck, you understand, I hope, what will be expected of you."

"I think I do," returned Osborne.

"Are you fully prepared?"

"I am," was the quiet rejoinder.

"Now, then," continued the Tomtit, "one more hint, and I am done for the present: before you get in the house, you will be carried over to a man named Tarleton, who is a sort of lawyer to this Van Cleeker. The cunning dog has been trying for a long while to get a coachman for the Van Cleeker mansion, who may be subservient and useful to his own ends. One of our city men, Slinger, has picked up an acquaintance with him, and agrees to furnish him with just such a person as he wants for a trifling pecuniary consideration. This Tarleton has possession of the old gentleman's property somehow, and now he's up to other game. Remember, be as sharp as he is, deceive him into the belief that you are working for *his* interests, but look out for ours."

Osborne, somewhat astonished by the complicated and not very flattering duties that were to devolve upon him, bowed his head in silence.

"Young man," pursued the Tomtit, "I hope you have not forgotten any of these instructions."

"None of them," returned Osborne.

"Very good, but keep a look out after that Tarleton?"

"Don't fear me," rejoined Osborne, with a very grim and meaning shake of his head.

"Well, young man, I know you will suit us to a hair, and in the division of the booty, you'll not be forgotten; Beg, there!"

"All right!" quoth that worthy, making his appearance enveloped in a huge overcoat, "everything's ready, I believe."

The Tomtit took him aside, and a brief consultation was held in a low tone, during which our hero had full opportunity to consider the general pith and substance of the instructions just imparted to him. The atrocious plan of robbery was to be culminated, if necessary, by the more heinous crime of murder, and he had been selected for that repulsive office; he could not think of the whole plot without feeling the strongest sentiment of disgust and indignation, and he inwardly resolved, whatever the consequences might be, to reveal it all as soon as opportunity placed it in his power.

In the midst of these reflections, he was interrupted by the stern voice of the Tomtit, directing him to follow, and so passing out in the cold morning air, with the bright stars shining overhead, Osborne and his two companions commenced their solitary journey.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEW ADVENTURES!

Walk into a narrow, dingy court, mount a flight of wooden, creaking steps, grope through a dark passage, and pitch head over heels into Mr. Job Tarleton's law-office, and you will execute a Zouave movement precisely similar to what Mr. Slinger performed one afternoon at 3 P. M., as he entered that gentleman's sanctum.

Picking himself up, at the same time giving vent to a very emphatic execration, the Tomtit's confidential agent replaced his hat on his head, and returned Mr. Pump's astonished gaze with an air of mingled defiance and contempt.

"Vy don't yer keep a glim 'ere?" growled Mr. Slinger.

"Eh?" replied the still more astonished partner. "Ahem! I don't comprehend!"

"I've a good mind," continued the irritated Mr. Slinger, "to punch yer eyes in. Vere's yer boss, hey?"

"Boss!" repeated the indignant Mr. Pump. "You are under a very serious misapprehension. Permit me to say that the relations between my——"

"Go to blazes," retorted Mr. Slinger, who had a very marked dislike to circumlocutory language. "Vot yer talking about? Vere's your boss? I've business with 'im."

It is very probable that Mr. Pump might have still stood in professed and dignified amazement at the familiar audacity of Mr. Slinger, but hearing the word business, he immediately remembered that Mr. Tarleton had left a peremptory message to send for him in case any one called. So muttering a few hasty words of explanation, he rushed off to the Van Cleeker House.

Meanwhile the erudite Mr. Slinger was gazing with an aspect of intense disgust at the rows of commentaries, digests and reports that lined the walls of Mr. Job Tarleton's law-office.

"Them's the things vot gits a cove in trouble, is it?" soliloquized Mr. Slinger. "Blast 'em all. Vot are lawyers good for, any'ow? They'll vork round a cove vith them are wolumes till they poke 'im in the crib, that's vot they'll do."

With this very characteristic and sage observation, Mr Slinger proceeded to dust his coat, take off his hat, look inside of it, and then replace it on his head again, the last movement having been hardly concluded before the door opened, and Mr. Tarleton entered.

The little light that struggled through the dirty casement rendered it rather difficult to recognize the bull-dog physiognomy of Mr. Slinger, but that gentleman removed all doubts respecting his identity by calling out—

"Vell, Mister Tarleton, I'm here, I am."

"Glad to see you, Grimeby," responded the lawyer. "Take a seat, Grimeby; sorry to keep you waiting so long."

"None uv yer compliments," interrupted Mr. Slinger, giving his own hat a ferocious knock on one side. "I'm werry plain, werry straightfor'ard, an' up to ther mark."

"So you are, Grimeby," returned Mr. Tarleton, laughing good-humoredly. "Come, sit down and tell me the news. Have you found him yet?"

"'Ave I found 'im?" repeated Mr. Slinger, contemptuously. "*Vy*, of course I've found 'im. Vot else did yer think I'd come 'ere for?"

Mr. Tarleton rubbed his hands.

"Did you follow out my instructions to the letter?"

"*Vy*, of course I did," replied Mr. Slinger, defiantly; "he's a reg'lar 'un, something werry purty an' nice. Didn't yer say yer vanted a feller vot vould vork yer own vay, an' not mind sneaking around the old cove's papers?"

"Hush!" interrupted Tarleton. "Don't speak quite so loud, that is just exactly the idea."

"Vell," pursued Mr. Slinger, putting his legs on the desk, and thrusting his hands in his pockets, "he's the werry man for you, gentle as a colt vich has been trained; any vay you pull, he goes."

"Good," said Tarleton. "Where can I see him?"

"See 'im?" repeated Mr. Slinger, carelessly, "vy, I s'pose you might see 'im now, if you vish."

"Where is he?"

Mr. Slinger's only reply was to walk towards the door and open it.

"'Elloo, Pluck! Valk in 'ere."

Osborne, who had been waiting outside during this brief colloquy, descended the steps that led into the office.

"Look out," cautioned Mr. Slinger; "you'll tumble on your 'ed. 'Ere he is," said Mr. Slinger, pushing him forward; "vot do yer think of him?"

Osborne had undergone some marked changes since his exit from the Burglars' Nest. He was clad in a coarse suit of gray, and his face ingeniously blackened with a burnt cork, as the Tomtit sagaciously observed, to create a more favorable impression.

Mr. Tarleton, after a hasty inspection of the new candidate for box honors, declared himself not very well satisfied.

"Is this your man?" inquired he, in no amiable tone, gazing on the girlish features of Osborne. "Why, he won't do at all."

"Vy von't he?" retorted Mr. Slinger, angrily. "Vot's the trouble, eh?"

"Too young and too good looking."

"Vell," returned Mr. Slinger, "didn't you say yer vanted a young 'un?"

"Not so very young as he."

"He isn't young," said Mr. Slinger; "you don't know him yet. Look here, Pluck; aint you werry green, eh?"

The artful Mr. Slinger having before privately instructed Osborne how he was to act, that young gentleman immediately performed a peculiar gyratory movement of his finger on his nose, much to the gratification of Mr. Tarleton, who now regarded him with new interest.

"Can you drive well?" inquired the lawyer.

"Tip top," returned Osborne.

"How long have you been in the city?"

"A matter of two weeks."

Mr. Tarleton cogitated a few moments.

"Well, Grimeby, I'll take him on trial; but I wish to speak to you in private a few moments."

"Valk out, Jerry," said Mr. Slinger, and Osborne retired once more into the passage.

"Now, Mr. Grimeby," said Tarleton, as soon as the door was closed, "I desire to ascertain, before I take this boy, some little additional information."

"Blow avay," rejoined Mr. Slinger.

"In the first place, how long have you known Jerry?"

"Vell," considered Mr. Slinger, thoughtfully, "I s'pose I've knowed 'im a matter o' vun or two veeks."

"Very good," returned Mr. Tarleton. "Has he, to your certain knowledge or belief, any connections, relatives, or personal friends in this city?"

Mr. Slinger shook his head negatively.

"Is your own acquaintance with him very friendly and close?"

"Look a-here," replied Mr. Slinger, who gradually began to comprehend the drift of the lawyer's queries, "ven I'm paid I'll make myself scarce, and no questions asked."

"That's the very thing I was coming at," continued Mr. Tarleton, taking out his purse. "When I bargain with you, I believe it's understood that you will leave him entirely to myself."

"Uv course," replied Mr. Slinger, with a sparkling eye, as he caught sight of the gold glittering through the meshes of the purse.

"Well, here is the amount agreed upon," observed Tarleton, handing it to him.

Mr. Slinger received it with many winks and nods expressive of his satisfaction.

"Ven you vant any more jobs of this 'ere kind, vy you know vere I am."

The interview being now conluded, Mr. Slinger called in the new coachman of the Van Cleeker mansion, and took an affectionate leave of him, not forgetting an admonitory frown when Mr. Tarleton's back was turned, and then descended into the street; fairly out of the presence of Mr. Tarleton, the tickled gentleman gave way to the natural tendencies of his disposition, and laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks, at the recollection of having outwitted a lawyer, and then hastened back to the den. Leaving him to announce the success of his manœuvre to the Tomtit, let us return to Osborne.

Mr. Tarleton, carefully closing his door, drew a seat close to him.

"Now Jerry," said he, "I wish you to remember you are in my service, not in Mr. Van Cleeker's. You go there as a coachman, fulfill all your regular services, receive your wages, but remember my orders are to be obeyed before all others."

"Werry good, sir," replied Osborne imitating the vernacular of his associates.

"And," continued Tarleton, eyeing him as he said it, with a cunning expression, "you will get separate wages for it—don't you see?"

"A werry rum idea, sir, vich pleases me a good deal," replied Osborne, with a comical smile.

"Well, Jerry," pursued Mr. Tarleton, putting on a very familiar air, "you shall be paid well. All I want from you is implicit obedience; you'll find your job as easy as you wish, and as for your duties, why the old fool seldom rides out much, so you won't have to do anything else but curry down the horses, shine up the harness, and see to the stable generally, but it is not the stable where I desire you to be. I would prefer, if you could manage to get in, to have you in the house; now, for instance, you might wait on the table, attend to——" Mr. Tarleton paused for he recollected that Mrs. Platt was a New England woman, and decidedly opposed to the English buttlery system, so he did not finish the sentence. "At all events," continued the lawyer, thoughtfully, "at all events, you might wait on table. I think the old man goes to his meals now—yes—well, once in there and it will give you an opportunity of——no matter now—I will tell you to-morrow. I am going to send you to Mr. Van Cleeker's immediately. Observe well what he says, and tell me everything that transpires; you comprehend me?"

"Yes, sir, up and down," returned Osborne, wondering what Mr. Tarleton could mean.

The lawyer drew his chair to his desk, and penned the following note:

"MR. VAN CLEEKER.—*Dear Sir*.—I have succeeded, finally, in securing the services of a valuable and trustworthy coachman, and I am satisfied you will find him in every respect, such a one as you desired me to obtain. He is of sober habits, well qualified for the position, and as he will be the bearer of this note, you will have an opportunity of examining him yourself, and testing the correctness of my judgment. Very respectfully,

"JOB TARLETON."

"This," said he, (handing the note to Osborne,) "will introduce you to Mr. Van Cleeker, and you can tell him that I will call this evening, and furnish him any additional information he may require. See here, Jerry, don't forget to come down to my office at half-past four o'clock to-morrow afternoon, when I will give you more explicit directions. If anybody should happen to be in the office, just say, Mr. Van Cleeker sent you to Mr. Tarleton, and it will be all right, now, don't forget."

"No, sir," returned Osborne.

"Very good, Jerry," continued Mr. Tarleton, smiling, and tapping him patronizingly on the head, "here's a fip, to get you a mug of ale. Now start."

Having got the street and number of the Van Cleeker mansion, Osborne took his departure. For the first time since his journey from the Nest, he found himself alone and comparatively at liberty.

"What extraordinary adventures!" muttered our hero, as he walked briskly up Chestnut street; "better had I remained free, and taken the chances of poverty, than to connect myself with such a set of scoundrels as these. Not only am I in league with the burglars, but about to be the tool of a scheming lawyer, who thinks to make me a spy on the old gentleman. What a crafty world this is. We play into each other's hands; and I, without intending it, am acting my part; but I will, by Heaven's help, thwart 'em all!"

With these reflections our hero pursued his way, and soon reached the Van Cleeker House.

Your aristocratic servants always introduce themselves by the front door, and announce their presence by an ostentatious ring. However humble their sphere may be in future, one hour of magnificent airs is a necessary infliction to housekeepers. Poor Osborne meekly crept down the basement, and gave the knocker a gentle tap.

Mrs. Platt was busied in the kitchen as usual, but Osborne knocked so softly she did not hear it.

"Poor, dear Fanny!" soliloquized the old lady; "I wonder what is the matter with her; she don't appear half as lively as she used to be, and I am sure something has happened. I can't believe she's in love with Mr. Tarleton, for now, I come to think of it, she said she hated him, or something of that kind. Nancy, I hear some one knocking at the basement door; go and see who it is?"

"It's a man that wants to see Mr. Van Cleeker," said Nancy, returning.

"Well, you might have told him he can't be seen to-day," returned Mrs. Platt. "Brother is in his old tantrums, and is just as bad ever."

Nancy went back with the message, and once more returned, saying that the young man had a letter for the old gentleman.

"A letter," repeated Mrs. Platt; "well, I suppose it's some business concern; take it up to brother, and let the young man come in the passage and wait."

Osborne was accordingly ushered into the entry, and the domestic ran off to fulfill her errand.

"Come in and warm yourself," said the good old lady, perceiving that Osborne modestly stood at the door.

Thanking her, Osborne accepted the invitation. What a kind, friendly voice it seemed to the grateful youth. He had not heard such a one for many a day, and he thought, too, Mrs. Platt's face the most genial he had ever seen.

"Have you been walking very far?" inquired she, as she kneaded her bread with her customary industry.

"No, ma'am, not very far," replied Osborne, smiling. "It wouldn't matter much if I had; I am strong and used to it."

"Well, you *do* look healthy," returned Mrs. Platt, fixing her gaze on his ruddy, handsome face; "I suppose you never had the dyspepsia. I was going to say if you had," continued she, "that a little powdered chalk and alum would be very beneficial. I am sure hundreds have been cured by it, and if brother would only use it, it would stop these periodical nervous attacks. Well, there's Nancy; did he read it, Nancy?"

"Yes, mem, an' he says it's the new coachman," replied Nancy, with an inquisitive stare at Osborne. "He told me to give you the paper, because it's all about him." So saying, the maid handed her Tarleton's note.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Platt, taking out her spectacles. "I'm sure I hadn't the least idea you was a coachman. James was such a different looking person, and," here she commenced to read, "well, I'm glad to hear you are sober and trustworthy, which James was not. I'm sure I never was so deceived in my life, and I never shall forget the day he came in the kitchen as drunk as he could be. I hope you never touch liquor."

"No, ma'am," replied Osborne; "I don't like it."

"I am glad to hear it," returned the old lady. "That was James's fault, and you see he lost a good place. What is your name?"

"They call me Jerry Pluck," responded Osborne, smiling within himself at the ludicrous cognomen he had assumed.

"Jerry Pluck?" repeated Mrs. Platt; "that's a very queer name, though, to be sure, I have met with names in history that's a good deal queerer. Well, Jerry, I hope you will suit us, though I don't see what brother wants of a coachman, for I am sure he never goes out to ride, or lets Fanny go either. Your master can't see you this evening, but, now I come to think of it, you might go over to the stable, and fix things right. Clem will show you round; he's a very clever colored man we've hired since James was dismissed, to take care of the horses. He'll help you, I know. Nancy, show James, I mean Jerry, the stable."

In a few moments more Osborne was in the stable, and Clem, an old negro man, was holding him at arm's length, surveying the youth from head to foot with an air of grotesque astonishment.

"Dis de new coachman?"

"Yes sir-ee, bob!" responded Osborne, good-humoredly seizing a whip, "and this, Mr. Clem, is my insignia of office. Look out you don't get it."

"O, bress yer soul, massa, ye can't cheat dis 'ar chile no way," said Clem, still gazing at him attentively; "ye doesn't look like dem 'ar, ye too peart. Whar did yer come from?"

"I'll let you know, Clem," returned Osborne, laughing, "if you won't tell anybody. I came from the land of flowers, and am a prince in disguise."

Clem shook his head.

"Some gem'num's son?" inquired he.

Osborne laughed again. "The poor fellow thinks better of me than I deserve," thought he. "No, Clem," he added, solemnly, "I am nothing but simply Mr. Jerry Pluck, coachman to the Van Cleeker mansion, and look here, sirrah, show me around, or I will use this whip to some advantage."

Clem grinned at the playful language of his young pupil, and proceeded to initiate him in the mysteries of his new profession. When Osborne committed any blunders, he would shake his head incredulously, and declare he was a "gem'num born," whereupon our hero would smile, and go to work with such assiduity as soon overcame all difficulties, and thus pleasantly passed away his first day at the Van Cleeker house.

CHAPTER XV.

OSBORNE IN HIS NEW HOME.

The new coachman of the Van Cleeker House, after going through his afternoon probationary exercises, under the friendly tutorage of Clem, was ready to do justice to his evening repast.

Mrs. Platt, who had taken a great fancy to him, stood by, talking with her accustomed volubility, and astonishing the inexperienced youth by recounting a number of thrilling battles by sea and land, which happened in ancient times, in which chronology, as usual, was set at defiance.

Never had the good lady a more patient or willing listener. Osborne, whose stock of reading was not very extensive, swallowed his supper and her history with equal relish.

"You see, James," observed Mrs. Platt, "you've a great deal to learn. The more we reads history, the better we like it; and I am sure, if everybody studied it, the world would become wiser; and it is a very astonishing thing, James, to see people, who pretend to know so much, look so stupid when you mention about Herodotus, Thucydides, or Dionysius of Heliocarnus, as though such books never existed. But I forgot, James—I mean, Jerry—to ask if you could read?"

"Yes, ma'am," returned Osborne; "I was taught reading and writing at the Asylum; but I never got much time to profit by it—they worked me so hard. I remember reading a little about the Revolutionary War, and I have often wished I had an opportunity of finishing it, for I should like to know all the particulars how we gained our independence."

Mrs. Platt shook her head.

"I don't think, James," continued she, "that it matters so much about our own country, because everybody knows it's true; but ancient history is different; and it is very interesting to read of things we are not sure ever happened, though they might have happened for all that. When I was a little girl, James, I was famous for remembering dates and battles, and I recollect when questions concerning them were asked, grown-up ladies and gentlemen would feel so mortified to see I knew more about it than they did."

Mrs. Platt, in her enthusiasm, quite forgot that she was talking to a coachman, and Osborne entered so heartily into her feelings, and showed so much deference for her opinion, that she promised not only to lend him a record of the Revolutionary War, but also proposed that he should peruse Rollin's Ancient History, commencing where she left off, which, she assured him, was the most interesting and instructive portion. And thus the old lady rattled on, busying herself about the kitchen all the while. She was in the midst of one of her long historical strains, when Osborne heard a musical voice calling her from the upper passage.

"Papa wishes to see the new coachman," said the little silvery voice.

"I will send him right up," returned Mrs. Platt. "Now, James, your master has sent for you," continued she, "and I wish to instruct you how you are to behave. Brother has the dyspepsia, and it makes him very odd and uneven—sometimes one thing and sometimes another. Now, he's just as cross and contrary, and reminds me sometimes of Heliogabalus, one of the Grecian or Egyptian emperors, who was so tyrannical that, out of pure caprice, he invited his courtiers to a banquet, and then tumbled them all in the water; which, I am sure, was very wrong in him, and not exactly as your master would behave were he an emperor, though there's no saying what he might do if he happened to be one."

Osborne could hardly refrain from smiling at the earnestness of the old lady, who proceeded to give him a little valuable advice, embodied in a few hints as to how he must demean himself before his new master, concluding with the flattering assurance that he would find him uncommonly cross and unreasonable.

Our hero, after cleaning his face of the burnt cork, and brushing his hair, to make himself presentable, followed Nancy up the winding staircase, and was ushered into Mr. Van Cleeker's chamber.

The old gentleman occupied his usual seat by the fire, but Osborne's gaze rested on the form of a lovely girl, who stood leaning on the chair, one hand resting on her cheek, and her soft, pensive eyes turned wonderingly towards him.

What a miracle of beauty! The entranced youth was charmed and bewildered. Poor fellow! he had seen few of the gentler sex in his day, and the little nymph, in her low-necked lilac dress, and flowing tresses, had ravished him quite.

Fanny, unconscious of the effect produced by her surpassing loveliness, raised her head, and touched the old gentleman on the shoulder.

"Here he is, papa."

"What a sweet smile," thought Osborne.

Mr. Van Cleeker wheeled his chair round so as to obtain a good view of Osborne. As Mrs. Platt had predicted, he was unusually cross and spleeny, and had ordered him up for no other purpose than to let off a little of his superfluous ill humor.

"Well sir, you are the new coachman, I presume?" said Mr. Van Cleeker, endeavoring to conceal his surprise at the apparition of a handsome youth, when he had expected a very different personage.

"Yes sir," replied Osborne quietly.

"What could Tarleton have been thinking of," muttered Mr. Van Cleeker, surveying Osborne from head to foot, "to send me a mere boy. Pray sir, have you had any experience in your present calling?"

"A little," replied Osborne, thinking of Clem and congratulating himself that he was not compelled to tell a downright falsehood.

"A little!" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker scornfully. "I don't believe a word of it. I dare say you never touched a whip in your life; but I'll be bound, sir, you've felt one. Now, what is your name sir?"

"Jerry Pluck," replied our hero, blushing to the eyes, for he observed a half mischievous smile playing round the corners of Fanny's beautiful mouth.

"Jerry Pluck!" echoed Mr. Van Cleeker contemptuously, "that's a very pretty name. Are you any connexion of that notorious character who was lately sent to the Penitentiary for marrying six wives and engaging himself to a seventh?"

"No sir," said Osborne, somewhat disconcerted.

"No sir!" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker, whose irritability was rather increased by the reflection that he had nothing to create it. "I don't believe a word of it. I should like to know why Mr. Tarleton sent me a boy, sir, to manage my affairs, to take care of my horses, to drive me out and perhaps overset me—how do I know you won't do it, eh?"

"I think I can drive very carefully," observed Osborne.

"*Think* you can!" repeated Mr. Van Cleeker angrily, "I don't like people around *me* who *think* they can do anything, I want 'em to *do* it. Upon my word, you *think* you can drive very carefully, and no doubt turn me over the first opportunity you get. Are you in the habit of drinking a little liquor now and then, socially or for your health, eh?"

"No sir," replied Osborne, "I am not very fond of intoxicating——"

"Bah!" interrupted Mr. Van Cleeker, who had now worked himself up to a very unreasonable state of ill humor, "you are a very immaculate person altogether! I presume you never saw such a compound as a gin sling, or whiskey punch, or even apple toddy—never tasted 'em either! Don't talk to me, you have it on your nose, sir!"

Poor Osborne, whose cheeks certainly were the reddest portion of his face, was quite confounded.

"Yes sir," continued Mr. Van Cleeker, provoked by the good temper of the youth, "I dare say you not only drink, but I shouldn't be at all surprised if you played cards; I should be quite prepared for it—I should be quite prepared to hear that you gambled; for drinking, sir, brings on gambling, and gambling leads to murder, and murder to the gallows. I shouldn't be at all surprised at it sir, not in the least."

Mr. Van Cleeker with this and other dark insinuations, commenced a rigid cross-examination of our hero, which he bore so patiently and submissively, that even Fanny pitied him.

There is a wonderful magic in a handsome face. If Osborne had been a rough, coarse clown, the little maiden would have perhaps enjoyed the scolding with all the roguish appreciation of fun, but here was a young, comely, pretty-faced stripling, standing before them, and it was natural she should think her father a little more harsh than was necessary. Osborne did not care much, he could have stood an age as long as those sweet melancholy eyes were rivetted on him, and when the interview was concluded, and she accompanied him out in the passage, in her very good nature, to assure him that her father was not offended with him, and that it was only his way, he blushed and stammered so that Fanny only pitied him the more.

As our hero wended his way down the spiral staircase the lovely girl still seemed pictured before him; then he thought of the Tomtit, and the villainous scheme of robbery, and the possibility of the young maiden falling in their hands, till he had worked himself up to a very high state of romantic excitement.

Having nothing particular to do he strolled back to the stable, and amused himself with making a few trifling alterations and improvements in the harness room. Clem had gone home for the night, and so he thought he would lock up and retire to bed himself.

Just as he was leaving, he heard a gentle tap on the stable door leading out in the back street.

"Who can that be?" thought Osborne—he listened.

"Tap, tap, tap."

"Who's there?" called our hero, with a flash of suspicion as he he approached nearer.

"It's *me*, Pluck," responded a familiar voice.

Osborne at once knew that it could be no other than Mr. Snag, so he let down the bars, and the identical gentleman forthwith entered, clapping Osborne heartily on the back, by way of salutation.

"Nary one about here?" whispered Mr. Snag.

"Not a soul," returned Osborne. "You can say what you please, for no one will be likely to interrupt us!"

This little piece of information seemed to afford Mr. Snag the most unlimited satisfaction; for, closing the stable door, he stretched himself on the bench, and taking out a short-necked bottle from one of his capacious pockets, raised it to his mouth, and imbibed a long and refreshing draught therefrom. This performance being concluded, he smacked his lips and offered it to Osborne.

"No, I won't," said Osborne, shaking his head.

"Rot me, if you aint a queer 'un," observed Mr. Snag, returning the bottle to his pocket; "*wot* can you do without it such a cold night as this 'ere?"

"Very easily," returned Osborne, regarding his unexpected visitor with anything but gratification. "Have you any news?"

"Well, Pluck, I've been dodging round here afore dark, trying to get a peep at you; for, you see, the Tomtit wanted to know as how you wos gettin' on. Everything is working straight as can be, and the job will come off on Saturday next, for certain. The Tomtit has the boys snug an' dark; an' I tell you wot, Pluck, it'll be a precious rich haul. You'll come in for a tall share of the spoils!"

"Well, Mr. Snag, it will be no more than I deserve!" responded Osborne, rubbing his hands with an air of complacency, which he was far from feeling. "Will all the boys be here?"

"Every one on 'em!" returned Mr. Snag. "An Winker and Slinger will keep watch away from the house, so as to give us the signal, in case the beaks come on us. Leave the Tomtit alone, he knows wot he's about. Blow me, if he ain't a rum-'un."

Mr. Snag, with this complimentary allusion to his chief, recurred to the short-necked bottle with evident enjoyment, and drew a deep inspiration.

"How did the Tomtit find out the existence of this chest of gold?" inquired Osborne, carelessly.

"How did he? That's wot I should like to know myself," returned Mr. Snag. "He found out, and that's all I can tell you. Wot a fellow he is for riggin' up, aint he, Pluck?"

"Capital," echoed Osborne.

"He'd cheat Old Nick himself. Many a day he's taken us in, dressin' up sometimes like an old 'oman; then agin making out he's one of the Big vigs; but, Pluck, your job's a handy 'un. You are a going to stand afore the old cove's bed, and pink him if he stirs. Just suits ye, eh?"

"The Tomtit couldn't give me anything better," responded Osborne, mastering his rising indignation. "I'm the very man for it."

"If you do it slick," remarked Mr. Snag, thoughtfully, "you'll be the gainer; for them that has the cutting allus gits more pay."

"Suppose," suggested Osborne, "some of the other members of the family should accidentally wake up and find we were in the house, what then?"

"Why smash 'em down, that's all," rejoined Mr. Snag, with an oath suitable to the occasion. "I'm the one that'll take them 'ere jobs in hand. There's only an old 'oman an' a gal in the house, 'sides the servant. If they git wind of the matter, this 'ere will finish 'em up in short order."

Mr. Snag, with this remark, drew out a slung shot.

"Neat little weapon, aint it, Pluck?"

"Very pretty," said Orborne, with a strong desire to test its utility on the head of the unconscious Mr. Snag. What use do you intend to make of it?"

"For the women, of course," replied Mr. Snag. "It'll put an end to their hollerin' and screeching, and setting the beaks on our trail. One night, Pluck, we were making a little visit to one of these 'ere houses, and arter prying around a little, one of our pals was lucky enough to get hold of a box of jewels, but rot me, just as we were leggin' it with our prize, a young 'oman comes out of her room, an' sets up a hollerin' an' caterwauling, and lays claim to 'em. It wos very vexatious, just as we were walking off, to be stopped and asked nasty questions, so I crept ahind her when she was parleying, and let this ere weapon in the back of her head, an' I tell you wot, Pluck, you heard no more from the young 'oman."

Mr. Snag grinned from ear to ear as he concluded this interesting little narrative, and applied his lips vigorously to the short-necked bottle.

"Now, Pluck," observed Mr. Snag, "I must be making tracks. It won't do for me to be seen about here. The Tomtit wanted me to sneak in and see if you was all straight, an' I have done it, so now I'll trot."

"Very good, Mr. Snag," rejoined Osborne, "tell your pals I'm getting along first rate, and everything is working right."

"Wot a rum 'un you be!" said Mr. Snag, admiringly. "You are a brick, an' just the 'un we want for this 'ere job. Keep on, my pals! The beaks will be trotting your name in the papers afore long, an' then you'll be famous."

With this complimentary prediction of the future distinction of his protégé, Mr. Snag gave him a farewell grip of the hand, and forthwith took his departure.

"You bloodthirsty scoundrel," whispered Osborne, as he shut out the burglar and carefully replaced the bars, "I'll disappoint you, and the rest of your ruffianly associates."

When he retired that night, our hero fully made up his mind what coursse to pursue, and that was to communicate to the old gentleman, on the following morning, the whole circumstances of the plot, and to warn him of the danger that was impending over the Van Cleeker house.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

◆

A MAN's mind is parcel of his fortunes; and a man's taste is a part of his dress. If we wore diamond rings on our fingers, cameos in our breast-pins, cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, breathing forth attargul, and pale lemon-colored kid gloves, our perceptions might be strangely altered.

"POLITENESS PAYS."

AN EVERYDAY SKETCH.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

Among the acquaintances of my youth there was one Peter Cox; and I am sorry to say that, from what little stock of patience he may have possessed, he invested none of it in Politeness. At all events, he did not do it when he entered business. Peter was a builder by trade, and one of the most thorough and faithful workmen in the country. If he undertook a contract, he was sure to perform his part punctually and properly. Still he was not always employed, for many who might otherwise have hired him, were repulsed by his uncouth manner of treating them, and sought assistance elsewhere.

"Peter," said his wife to him, one evening, "do you know that you have lost a good job just by offending Mr. Graham?"

Peter looked up from his paper, and asked her what she meant.

"I mean," she replied, "that Mr. Graham has hired Leavitt to build his new house."

"Well—what of it?" said Peter, rather crustily.

"Why, I am very sure that he meant to have hired you to do the job; and that he would have done so had you not offended him."

"How did I offend him?"

"By not listening to him when he wished to describe to you his plan for the building."

"His plan was a foolish one."

"Well, suppose it was: if you had felt it to be your business to tell him so, you might have done it in a polite way."

"Bah!" cried Peter, with a snap of his finger, "don't talk of politeness in business. If I were to bother myself to be polite to everybody who happened to call upon me, I should have my hands full."

"I think it would pay," ventured the wife.

Peter pooh'd at the idea; and then told his wife that he wanted to read.

About a month after this Peter came home in unusual spirits. He had been out of work for some time, and had been rather moody and crusty. His wife noticed the change, and asked him what had happened.

"There's a prospect of work," he replied. "We are to have better times in town. Sumner Wilkins, of Byfield, has bought the whole of the water-power on our stream, and is going to erect a factory here. I think I'll get the job. They say that Wilkins would rather have some one here do it, and my friends will recommend me."

Mrs. Cox was highly delighted, for she knew that such a job must pay well; and she hoped that her husband might not be disappointed.

A few days afterwards an order came in for some window blinds; and one afternoon, while he was busy at his bench, a man came, and watched him at his work for some few seconds without speaking. He was a middle-aged man, rather coarsely clad; and Peter supposed it must be some one who wanted work.

"How dy'e do?" said the stranger, as Peter laid aside the slat which he had just finished.

"How dy'e do?" returned Peter, in a sort of uncouth grunt.

"That looks like good lumber you're working there," remarked the visitor.

"It's good enough," was the response.

"What is such lumber worth here?"

"I don't know;" and as Peter thus answered, he took another slat, and began to plane it.

"I suppose you buy some lumber, sir," said the stranger.

"I do when I want it," returned Peter, without looking up from his work.

"Is there any in town to be sold?"

"They'll tell you at the mill. I don't saw lumber myself."

"But you know the value of it here," remarked the stranger, with a slight touch of feeling in his tone.

"Who told you so" retorted Peter.

"I supposed, as you were in the way of using considerable lumber of various kinds, that you would be a proper person to ask."

"Well, sir," said our grouty builder, in his uncouth, unkind and ungentlemanly way, "it so happens that I have something else to attend to besides keeping the price of lumber for everybody who may happen to want a few boards."

"Ah! yes; I didn't know you were so busy," returned the visitor, in the coolest and most polite manner imaginable. "Pardon me if I have interrupted you." And with this, he left the shop.

Peter Cox had done no more in this instance than he had done a great many times before; but yet he could not put it from his mind so easily. Somehow it clung to him, and even after an hour had passed, he found himself wishing that he had treated his visitor with a little more decency. But it was too late now.

Peter got his blinds all made, and then waited for news from Byfield, as it was expected that Sumner Wilkins would soon make arrangements to commence operations. He felt sure of the job, as his friends had seen Wilkins, and recommended him strongly. It would be as good as three dollars a day to him for several months.

One morning, as Peter came out on to the street, he heard it remarked that Wilkins had got his hands all engaged, and would break ground very soon. It could not be possible, thought our builder. Surely he would have had some notice of such a move. Half an hour after that, he was standing at the door of a grocery, when a man drove up in a carriage, and came into the store. He bowed to one or two who stood there, but gave Peter only a cold look. It was the man who had called at his shop two weeks before, and inquired the price of pine lumber. He was dressed as plainly as ever, but he drove a splendid horse, and the carriage was a costly one.

"Who is that man?" Peter asked, after the stranger had gone.

"That," returned a by-stander, in evident surprise; "don't you know him?"

"No. Who is it?"

"Why, that is Mr. Wilkins."

"What Wilkins?"

"Sumner Wilkins, of Byfield."

"The man who is going to build the factory?"

"Yes."

Peter Cox left the store with a sinking heart; and by the time he reached his shop he was almost sick. What a fall it was. He went home to dinner, and ere long his wife had learned the whole story. She had already learned that the great job had been given to another, and now why it had been done.

"Why didn't he let me know who he was when he came into my shop," said Peter, in a petulant mood.

"That isn't the question," suggested the wife, speaking as considerately as possible. "It would be better, Peter, if you would ask why didn't you treat him respectfully? It seems, from your own account, that he asked a very simple and proper question—such a question as any man ought to answer with pleasure. I tell you, my husband, POLITENESS PAYS. If you could only overcome your habit of treating strangers so uncouthly, you would be greatly the gainer thereby."

For some days Peter Cox was sore and morose. He saw the work commenced upon the factory without his assistance, and he feared that he should have but little business for some time to come. He had at first been inclined to think very hard of Sumner Wilkins; but when he came to reflect more calmly, he thought differently. He could not wonder that the man had been repulsed by his rudeness.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Peter was in his shop, doing nothing but thinking, when some one entered. He looked up, and saw Mr. Wilkins.

"How d'ye do?" said the capitalist.

"How d'ye do?" returned the builder.

"You are not very busy, I take it," added Wilkins.

A quick, rough answer was making its way to Peter's lips; but he did not speak it. He recollected himself in season. He had taken a solemn obligation upon himself that he would not allow any more such words to go out from his mouth upon his fellow men.

"No, sir," he replied, as soon as the old spirit had been quelled; "I am not very busy just now."

"Perhaps you would like to work for me."

"As you wish it."

"Well," said Wilkins, "I am in want of help, and should like to employ you. I meant to have employed you before; and perhaps you can imagine why I did not. However," he added, as he saw Peter's countenance fall, "there's no need of referring to that, only for the lesson it teaches. I felt the cut of your rudeness very deeply; and, the more so, because I could not see wherein I had given any occasion for it."

"I was rude," returned Peter, frankly; "and, as you have intimated, I found a lesson in the result; and I hope I may profit by it."

"That's enough, sir. And so we'll let the past go." Wilkins extended his hand as he spoke, and Peter grasped it warmly.

"And now," the visitor continued, "let's come to our business. The man whom I had engaged to superintend the erection of my mill, has so much other business that he would like to be spared from this; so, if you will take it, I will let him go."

Of course Peter took it; and when the mill was done, so well and faithfully had he performed his work, that he had more offers of valuable contracts than he could possibly attend to.

But Peter Cox did not forget the prime secret of this new success. He knew that he was eminently qualified as an architect and builder; but this was not all. He also knew that the last lesson he had learned was the most valuable one—that the last investment he had made was yielding him the greatest interest. And, moreover, the income from the Politeness which he had come to possess was not all gross and material. No, no,—one of its highest and purest fruits was that which came to his heart and which remained with him to bless him, wherever he went.

◆

THE STEPMOTHER;

OR,

WHO'S TO WIN.

BY J. F. SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "RICHARD HOFFMAN," "STANFIELD HALL," "MINNIGREY," ETC. ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER LVII.

> Were his eyes open? Yes, and his mouth too:
> Surprise hath this effect, to make one dumb;
> Yet leave the gate, which eloquence slips through,
> As wide as if a long speech were to come. BYRON.

Many and curious eyes were watching at the poorhouse to get a peep at Collin Craw as he passed through the porter's lodge to the matron's room, where Peg Manders, the nurse, had been closeted all the morning with Mrs. Penguin, who had wasted both promises and eloquence to wring from the aged pauper her reasons for desiring an interview with her foster son. The woman was neither to be cajoled nor bribed: to every question she made the same unvarying reply:

"To Collin—only to Collin."

"Perhaps he may not come," observed the lady, looking at her watch. "'Set a beggar on horseback.' I dare say you have heard the proverb, Peg. He is a great man now; but I remember him when he was little enough, and so do you. Ben, the postman, says that his letters are directed 'C. Craw, *Esquire*,' and two of them have had coronets upon the seals. An inn is not good enough for him," she added, tossing her head. "He is staying at Brook House."

It certainly was very wrong in the boy she had scolded, cuffed, and made a drudge for so many years, not to fly to the august presence of the matron of Wicksal workhouse the instant he received her note, instead of visiting Humphrey Skillet in his prison first.

"And why shouldn't he have 'squire' upon his letters, and stay at Brook House?" exclaimed the nurse, greatly excited. "I allays said he'd come to good fortune."

"*I'd rather hear why he should*," replied Mrs. Penguin, tartly; "and I must say that it is very ungrateful of you not to tell me, considering," she added, emphatically, "my position in the house and the indulgence I have always shown you—tea three times a-week instead of skilly."

Peg Manders muttered something about stale, used leaves, and the draining of the matron's teapot.

Despite the remonstrances of Bolt, the porter, a number of aged paupers would press into the lodge in the expectation of catching a glimpse of the great lawyer, whom they remembered a ragged, ill-used boy, creeping about the wards. A feeling stronger than curiosity or interest, we fear, mingled with their eagerness to see him—visions of "tips" to purchase tobacco, snuff, and other little luxuries.

"If you don't keep back, Watts," exclaimed the indignant functionary, addressing a little old man, "I must send you to the strong room."

"You can't!" chorused the crowd.

"'Gainst the regulations, without the master's orders," observed one of the ringleaders.

"And he is in gaol," added a second.

The females advised him to read the orders signed by the visiting justices.

In the midst of this confusion and altercation, Collin arrived, and was welcomed by a very respectable huzza! considering the advanced age of those who gave it.

"Not my fault, sir," said the porter, respectfully; "but there is no keepin' on 'em back—they knows Mr. Skillet is absent."

"Take yer hat off when yer speaks to a real gentleman," cried Watts, in a feeble treble.

"Where should he learn manners?" asked one of the women.

This question was followed by a laugh, which so discomposed Mr. Bolt, that he involuntarily complied with the advice the little old pauper had given him.

The laugh was repeated. The pride of the porter was hurt, and, casting a look of indignation and defiance upon the rebellious paupers, he majestically replaced his hat again.

"My good friends," exclaimed Collin, advancing in the midst of his former acquaintances, "I have not forgotten you. I have suffered and can sympathize with you; rely upon my not quitting Wicksal without leaving you some token of my remembrance."

At this assurance there was a second shout for Mr. Craw, mingled with cries of "Down with the master!" and hopes that he would be hanged.

"At present, I am here on business," added the speaker, with a smile; “but you shall see me again before my departure, I promise you.”

These kind words, and the contents of his purse judiciously distributed, induced the poor creatures to retire to their respective wards, where, during the rest of the day, little was spoken of except the great change of good fortune that had occurred to the pauper boy.

When Collin entered the apartment of the matron, it was amusing to observe the struggle between old familiarity and involuntary respect with which Mrs. Penguin received him. She giggled till the corrugated rolls of fat accumulated round her short neck assumed a purple apoplectic hue—hoped he was well—held out her hand; then, as suddenly recollecting her dignity, pointed to a chair, and told him he *might* be seated, and giggled again.

“Thank you, my *good woman*,” replied the lawyer, seating himself, “my walk from the prison has rather tired me.”

“*Good woman*” and the allusion to the prison acted as a sedative to the mirth of the matron, whose little black eyes dilated with surprise and anger at what she afterwards pronounced his impudent familiarity to her.

Very different was his greeting to his old nurse, whom he shook cordially by the hand, and placed in an arm-chair beside him.

“You wished to see me, Mrs. Penguin?” he observed.

“Well—yes. I certainly did write you,” answered the lady; “and, considering the kindness I always showed you, I can't help saying that you might have called without giving me the trouble, not that I minded it. But since you have got up in the world, you have become quite a different person—forgotten your old friends.

“No, he aint,” said Peg Manders, regarding him with looks of affection. “You see, thof he be a gentleman, he aint a bit ashamed of me.”

“Ashamed of you!” repeated Collin, once more taking the withered hand of the speaker in his; “why should I be ashamed of you?”

“The house is never so much wuss since you wor here,” continued the aged pauper. “The skilly be thinner nor ever—the meat on Sundays a mortal sight harder. But it worn't about that I sent for you.”

“It was you, then, who sent for me?” exclaimed the lawyer, with surprise.

“Yes, Collin, dear,” replied the woman. “Yer aint angry, are yer?”

“No, nurse, no.”

“I know'd yer wouldn't be, so I got the missus to write to yer, for I can't write nor read myself.”

“Peg has something on her mind,” said the matron, whose curiosity got the better of her indignation at hearing the dietary scale of the house run down.

“It cannot be very serious,” observed Collin Craw, with a sad smile. “The greater part of her life has been passed within these walls.”

“So they have, darlin'; forty years come Martinmas.”

“And what is it you wish to say to me?” demanded the gentleman.

The nurse shook her head significantly.

“Surely you have not changed your mind?”

“Wait!” whispered Peg; “wait till we are alone.”

“Alone!” exclaimed Mrs. Penguin, whose quick ear had caught the words, despite the low tone in which they were uttered. “Well! marry come up! alone! what will happen next, I should like to know? Alone! who ever heard of such a thing?”

“I cannot ask or expect that you should quit your own apartment for our convenience,” said Collin Craw. “Nurse and I will therefore retire to the board-room. Do not trouble yourself to rise,” he added; “I know the way.”

Without waiting a reply, he took his old nurse by the arm, and led her away.

“The world is at an end,” exclaimed the lady, as soon as passion and astonishment at his coolness permitted her to speak. “Am I really Sarah Penguin, matron of Wicksal workhouse for these—hem—*ever so many years?*” (Not even to herself did the speaker like to admit the exact number.) “Braved by a brace of paupers! We shall see—we shall see!”

Bracing her nerves with a glass of the parish wine, she hastened after them, and to her intense disgust, found the door of the board-room locked.

“No one can interrupt us now,” observed Collin Craw, placing Peg Manders as far from the door as possible, “or overhear what you have to say. I partly guess the nature of the communication,” he added. “Humphrey Skillet hinted at some circumstance connected with my birth, which he offered to reveal to me, provided I would aid him in baffling the ends of justice.”

“The villain!” ejaculated the aged woman. “You think he will be hanged, then.”

“His chance of escape is a slight one,” was the reply; a piece of intelligence that appeared to afford his hearer no slight satisfaction.

The feeling was very terrible and reprehensible, no doubt, but the poor, ignorant creature had endured the tyranny and insolence of the master for years, and, beyond the cold formula of prayer which the chaplain hurried through twice a week, and the pauper inmates mechanically repeated, had but faint notions of religion. To the divine dogma of Christianity, “Love them that persecute and despitefully use you,” her heart was practically a stranger.

“I am glad to have seen yer agin before I die,” said the nurse. “It has been long on my mind, and I often thought o' tellin' yer; but yer wor so young when yer left the house, and I was afeard of Humphrey. I aint afeard on him now—no, nor Mistress Penguin either.”

“Collin, darlin',” she added, laughing at the recollection, “how awful the tricked-out Jezebel looked when yer called her ‘my good woman’—she as used to cuff yer, and set yer a-runnin' on her errands—she as is allays used to be spoken to as the ‘missus’ and ‘marm.’”

The lawyer could scarcely repress a smile, for he, too, remembered the astonishment of the matron at his want of respect to her dignity.

“But never mind that now,” continued Peg Manders. “Yer mustn't interrupt me, dear, till I've told all I know. My poor head aint as clear as it was—that it beant; may be old age, and may be the rheumatiz—God knows best.”

Her hearer thought it best to let her run on, knowing that her loquacity must come to an end at last.

“How old are yer, Collin?”

“Thirty, nurse.”

“Ah! then it's just thirty years ago since Humphrey Skillet sent for me from the women's ward—I worn't nuss then—to his private office. It was a bitter cold night—the snow upon the ground, by token that I slipped and fell as I crossed the yard, and hurted my knees just in the place where I fust felt the rheumatiz. Well, when I came to the office—it wor afore Bolt's time—old Paul was porter then—I found the master with a stranger—at least, he didn't belong to the house—and a bundle rolled up in a shawl upon the table. Of course it worn't my place to speak fust; so I waited for the master to speak; and presently he says to me. ‘Mrs. Manders,’ says he, ‘just take that child, and change the clothes on it.’ ‘What child?’ said I, then he pointed to the bundle; and there, Collin, sure enough, yer wor, carefully wrapped up, as only a woman's hand could a-wrapped yer.”

The speaker paused for want of breath, and her hearer, despite his agitation, restrained his impatience, lest his excitement and words should break the thread of her recollection.

“Where did I leave off?”

“At the—shawl—the child!”

“Ah! I remember—I remember,” muttered the woman, nodding her head. “I remember well. Humphrey Skillet gave some old things as had belonged to Nelly Atty's Infant, as died, and I stripped yer of yer pretty frock and the fine linen yer wore, and put the pauper's rags upon yer.”

“And what became of the clothes?”

“The master took 'em.”

“All!”

“A peculiar, cunning smile lit the wrinkled features of Peg Manders when she heard the question, and, lowering her voice to a whisper, she replied:

“Not all, Collin, darlin'—not all!”

A flush of intense satisfaction suffused the pale features of her hearer.

“It wor a sin and a shame,” murmured Peg Manders, as if she were talking to herself, rather than addressing her words to another, “to see the stranger that wor in the office wi' Humphrey Skillet take the smart froc' wi' all the beautiful lace, and burn it. Such pretty caps as it would have made too! and I wanted caps bad enough then. Howsumever, I didn't let all the clothes go, but managed to hide a handkerchief and the little shirt yer had on yer, in my pocket, just while the master and the man had their backs turned, and wor a whisperin' and poin' the other things into the fire.”

“And you have preserved them?” demanded Collin, eagerly.

“Ay, ay, ay! that I have,” replied the aged pauper, triumphantly; “cunning as they wor, old Peg outwitted them. The master threatened awful, if ever I prated a word of what I'd done, and promised a molt of fine things to keep me silent, but he never kept his promises; so I just stitched the handkercher and the little shirt in the linin' of my stays, where I ha' gotten 'em still. I allays sleeps in 'em,” she added, meaning, we presume, the stays.

“Yer won't forget me, will yer, if good fortune comes on it?”

“Forget you!” repeated Collin. “I owe you too deep a gratitude for all your kindness and care when I was a helpless infant.”

“The parish paid me for that,” observed his nurse, with the utmost simplicity.

The intelligence he had just heard, produced a singular revulsion in the feelings of the lawyer, who, although he rarely alluded to his birth—even with his most intimate friends—entertained a morbid sensitiveness upon the subject. It was not the humbleness of his parents, but their unnatural abandonment of him.

There was the wound that galled him.

“I was not exposed, then, at the gate of the workhouse, Peg,” he exclaimed, “as I have been given to understand?”

“Yes, yer wor.”

“I do not comprehend how that is to be reconciled with the tale you have just told me.”

“How it's what?” demanded the aged pauper. “Don't speak so fine; it bothers. I aint much larning, yer know.”

Collin repeated the objection in a more simple form.

“Oh! oh! I know what yer mean, now,” replied the woman. “Humphrey Skillet *'sposed* yer; for when yer wor dressed in the parish rags, he and the gentleman as helped to burn the purty frock wi' the beautiful lace, and the shawl, took yer away, and I wor sent back to the ward. In 'bout an hour, there wor awful ringing, and presently old Paul, the porter, brought yer into the house, sayin' as he had found yer at the gate. I know'd yer ag'in,” she added; “and good reason, too, since I had had the dressin' on yer.”

“And you have never told this to any one?”

“Never! That is, may be to Nelly. Yer recollect Nelly, as wor nu's' afore me? But she has been dead three years come Martinmas.”

“And to no other?”

Peg Manders gave a silent negative.

“And the handkerchief and the little shirt?” said the lawyer, anxiously.

The aged pauper intimated that they still remained sewn up in her stays.

“Were they marked?” added the gentleman.

“Were they what?”

“Marked—any letters or writing upon them?”

“Letters! Let me see—let me see! Yes, there wor—two letters.”

“Do you recollet them?”

“Can't read, Collin dear,” replied the nurse, “but I've heard say as mother and father could; but I wor so young when they died.”

A very brief reflection decided the astute lawyer how to act. Prudence as well as gratitude and humanity forbade him to leave the poor old creature in the workhouse, where she would be in the hands of the matron, who might possibly tamper with her in the interests of her colleague, Humphrey Skillet, or be sure to torment her for the gratification of her curiosity.

“Do you think you are strong enough to walk, nurse?” he asked.

“Walk!” repeated Peg Manders, wonderingly.

“Only as far as Brook House. You shall no longer remain an inmate of this place, but be cared for, and made comfortable in your old days.”

The aged pauper, who had counted on the gift of tea and snuff, or at most upon a guinea to purchase such little luxuries, could not restrain her joy at the assurance. Like most of her class, she had an intense horror of dying in the poorhouse, although she had lived contentedly enough the greater part of her sad, monotonous existence.

“It must be fur indeed, darlin', that I couldn't walk,” she muttered, “to escape from here.”

Great was the astonishment of Bolt, the porter, and Mrs. Penguin when Peg Manders discharged herself from Wicksal workhouse. At first, the matron would have objected, but Collin cut her short by quoting the law upon the point.

“Only wait till I can send for the guardians,” suggested the lady.

“The guardians have nothing to do with it.”

“To the visiting justices, then.”

“She is going to the residence of one of them.”

This was the only piece of information the matron contrived to extract, and, woman-like, she made the most of it, building a dozen wild and fanciful theories respecting Collin Craw, only to demolish them one after the other.

“Shut the gates, Bolt,” she said in a tone of resignation, after watching the lawyer and the old nurse half way down the street. “The world is coming to an end.”

“I think it be, missis.”

“And it will begin at Wicksal.”

On this point the porter did not look as if he felt quite so confident.

After giving him strict instructions respecting the inmates (for Mrs. Penguin felt that the entire discipline of the house devolved upon her) she retired to her own room to meditate, drink the parish wine, sleep, and dream a most uncomfortable dream respecting the accounts, Humphrey Skillet, and being sent to prison.

The gentlemen at Brook House listened to Collin's account of his interview with Peg Manders with feelings of the deepest interest. The circumstances in themselves were sufficiently remarkable to excite curiosity and sympathy, but doubly so as affecting one whom they respected for his integrity and perseverance.

“Who, after this,” said the doctor, “will dispute the axiom, that truth is stranger than fiction? Here have we been living, in this quiet, out of the way nook, without the slightest suspicion of the drama acted under our very eyes, and in which each of us may, unconsciously, have taken a part.”

“Humphrey Skillet appears to have been a wholesale dealer in crime and mysteries,” observed Squire Beachum. “What is your opinion of them, Trevanion?”

“They all radiate from one centre.”

“And that centre is——?”

“Moultree Park.”

The worthy magistrate nodded his head significantly. He was of the same opinion, too.

“You are silent, Edward,” he exclaimed turning to the Templar, who started like a man suddenly roused from a dream. “What are you thinking of?”

“I cannot fix my thoughts,” replied the nephew of Sir Barnard Gaston; “my brain seems haunted by a confused recollection. I no sooner grasp a clue than it escapes me, and a fresh subject presents itself. Have you the handkerchief and the little shirt you spoke of?”

Collin Craw, who had obtained them from the nurse, produced them. They were discolored by age, and of the finest texture, especially the first.”

The squire's housekeeper was called, and, after due examination, she pronounced both handkerchief and shirt to be of French cambric.

Rather a singular material for the dress of a pauper child!!

“Can you perceive any mark or letters?” demanded Edward Gaston.

The woman answered in the negative.

“I am not convinced of that,” said Collin; “my old nurse assures me that they were marked when they came into her possession; but, being unable to read, and afraid to show them, she never knew the letters. See,” he added, holding the handkerchief up to the light; “either imagination deceives me, or I perceive something like a C in the corner. The first letter has entirely faded.”

Every one present examined it—each could perceive a something.

“Will you trust it to me for a day or two?” demanded Trevanion.

The lawyer placed it in his hand.

“For what purpose, Doctor?” inquired Squire Beachum.

“To renew the color of the faded ink,” replied the man of science. “The experiment is not a very difficult one; nitrate of silver enters largely into its composition.”

“Accomplish that, my dear sir,” exclaimed the lawyer, with a flush of hope, “and I shall believe that Providence has furnished me with the clue to this mystery.”

“Perhaps,” murmured Edward Gaston to himself—“perhaps.”

CHAPTER LVIII.

Remorse is as the heart on which it grows.
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison tree, that, pierced to the inmost,
Weeps only tears of poison. COLERIDGE.

There was something almost demoniacal in the rage of Sir Barnard when he found himself a prisoner in the chamber at West Lodge, so lately occupied by his grandson. Even the officers who guarded him, accustomed as they were to scenes of madness and despair, stood aghast at the terrible imprecations he heaped upon the instrument of his crimes, against whom he would have proceeded to personal violence but for their presence.

“Dog!” was the mildest term he employed in addressing the wretch who had dared to shed the blood of a Gaston.

Humphrey Skillet endured this storm of indignation for some time in silence; the gravity of his position appalled him—cowed the little stock of animal courage he possessed; but even his currish spirit became roused at last, and he asked his employer, sarcastically, whether the crime would have been less had the poor youth met his death from one of his own name and kindred—a question that somewhat staggered the baronet.

“Because, if it would not,” added the ruffian, “I don't see much difference between us.”

“Insolent villain!”

“It was ‘good, faithful Humphrey’ once,” observed the master. “I have lost my place through you, and may be something more, and this is your gratitude!”

Sir Barnard was about to reply, when he noticed one of the Bow-street officers writing, and, not doubting but the man was taking notes of their conversation, he mastered his passion, and fell into a gloomy silence.

Bitter indeed were the reflections of the fallen man, as he paced the limits of the lonely chamber; the past flitted like the phantasma of some waking dream before him. The energies, the purposes of his existence wasted or worse employed, as Providence had so wrought it to the destruction of the hope for which he sinned. He thought of his first wife, the coldness and neglect which had slowly but surely undermined her health—of his eldest son Albert, and Maude—next of Lady Alicia and her children. No wonder the contrast was so appalling, that more than once he paused to wipe aside the thick, damp dew gathered on his brow.

The cold, gray dawn of morning, instead of bringing him relief, but added to his horror—he, the wealthy, the proud Sir Barnard Gaston must appear before his brother magistrates and give an account of his conduct, submit to be questioned like a common felon, meet the cold, inquiring looks of former friends, or worse, the well-bred, pitiless stare of political opponents rejoicing at his humiliation.

But what he dreaded more than all was being taken through Wicksal, where he had so long been looked upon as something but little less than a monarch. Death appeared almost preferable to such humiliation.

On the removal of his fellow-prisoner to the gaol, which took place at an early hour, the baronet partially recovered the self-possession that had abandoned him. One cause of irritation at least had disappeared, and he threw himself upon the bed, where William had passed so many weary hours watching the stars through the grated windows, and tried to sleep. He succeeded after a while, but in his slumbers, judging from the convulsive twitchings of his features, and the sighs and groans that broke from him, fresh horrors visited him in his dreams.

So distressing did they at last become, the Bow-street officers, out of pity, agreed to wake him, and on making the attempt, discovered that it was a fit he had fallen into.

Fortunately, they were used to such things; and with some difficulty succeeded in recovering him. So severe was the attack that its effects were still visible when Lady Alicia arrived at the lodge to hold what proved a last interview with her unhappy husband. Although possessed of more than ordinary nerve, the haughty, manœuvering wife perceived with dismay the change a few short hours had wrought in him—the hollow eyes—the terribly suggestive drooping of one of the lids.

There are feelings in the heart of woman, which, however time, absence, or unkindness may dim, can never be entirely effaced. Years of estrangement pass—they are almost forgotten, and a look or word suffice to recall them; the chord vibrates again, responsive to the slightest touch of sympathy.

“Barnard! Barnard!” she exclaimed; “do not look so coldly on me. I came to consult, advise, console you. My heart is breaking.”

The baronet regarded her with an expression of incredulity.

“You know not what I have suffered,” she continued.

The prisoner glanced silently round the chambers, then at the two officers, who had withdrawn to the window not to overhear their conversation.

“Lydia expired this morning,” added her ladyship. “The intelligence of her son's death proved fatal; she never spoke after hearing it.”

A convulsive movement agitated the features of Sir Barnard; there was a spasmodic drawing down of the corners of the mouth.

“Are your orders so strict,” he said, turning to those who watched him, “that you can not permit me a few minutes private conversation with Lady Gaston?”

The men regarded each other hesitatingly.

“What is it you fear?” he added. “That I should lay violent hands upon my own life? Preposterous! It has not come to that pass with me yet.”

The officers had heard quite enough to feel satisfied that the capital charge against their prisoner could not be established; and as for the locksmith, in all probability the charge for abducting him would never be brought to trial.

“It is not exactly against orders,” observed the senior; “and if you will give your word of honor not to escape——”

The baronet pointed to the grated window.

“*Or do anything rash?*”

“You have my word, and shall be rewarded for your compliance,” replied Sir Barnard. “I shall not long remain in custody.”

The officers thought so too, and descended to the apartment below, taking the precaution, however, to secure the door after them.

“And so Lydia is dead,” said Sir Barnard, fixing his eyes reproachfully upon Lady Alicia. First Egbert, next his son, and now his widow. Such are the results of your clever scheming. The rank I felt so proud of will be extinct, or descend to those I hate.”

“I have been punished in the loss of your confidence and affection,” murmured his wife; “in the downfall of my dearest wishes. Your very menials have insulted me.”

“How?”

She related to him the singular conversation that had passed between the housekeeper and herself a few hours previously.

The baronet, as he listened to her statement, became fearfully excited, and more than once interrupted her by angry, intemperate expressions.

“You have ruined me!” he exclaimed. “I have more to fear from that woman's anger than the ridiculous accusation hanging over me. She knows all. She prepared the body for the grave; was present at——”

He stopped, fearing he had gone too far, and turned his head aside.

“Tell me *all*, Barnard,” said his wife, impressively, at the same time placing her hand upon his arm; “had you but trusted me, this misery had not have fallen upon us. I am no weak, puling girl; but a woman, with less of man's strength, perhaps, but more of his strong will. If you refuse to trust me from affection, consent, at least, to accept my services as an instrument of safety.”

Her husband regarded her doubtfully.

“I have no son now,” she added, “to divide my affection. The secret Squires alluded to concerns your elder brother.”

“Yes.”

“Who was drowned *accidentally, of course?*”

“Yes.”

“I guessed as much,” murmured her ladyship; “my heart divined it. Did he die unmarried?”

“Question me no more upon that subject,” said Sir Barnard, hoarsely. “Already I begin to feel that Heaven is armed against me. I have two dangers to apprehend: the treachery of Beckford—money will buy him, body and soul—and the discovery of the casket. One being only in the world knows where it is concealed.”

“The locksmith!” exclaimed his wife. “I recollect. I thought you told me that he was no longer dangerous, but had become a hopeless, drivelling idiot.”

“A mask!” replied the baronet, bitterly; “a shallow mask, and I not to see through it! Weakness, after all, will prove my ruin, not my crimes.”

“He shall be cared for,” whispered Lady Alicia, sternly. “And the casket,” she added; “what does it contain?”

“Proofs of the past and evidences for the future,” replied the baronet.

“Madness! Why not have destroyed them?”

“Shall I tell you why?” said her husband, drawing her nearer to him. “The dotard who ruled my life, separated me from you, and compelled me to marry another whom I could not love, wrote with his own hand, upon the back of the deed which limited the entail of his estates, an acknowledgment of his eldest grandson's marriage, and the birth of an heir.”

“And why did he do this?” exclaimed Lady Gaston, greatly surprised.

“To prevent the extinction of his name. Had a son succeeded me, all might have been well. But on my death the title, as the world believes, descends to Edward.”

“A barren heritage,” observed his hearer.

“What if he claims the estates?” whispered Sir Barnard. “Are you so dull of comprehension? They must be his, or——”

“Or what?”

“The deed produced which conveys them to another heir. Now do you understand the position in which the loss of the casket places me? The woman Squires was one of the witnesses to the old man's signature, the father of Edward the other. Neither of them know the secret they attested.

“My brother,” he added, “might have suspected it, for he left a packet of papers to be placed in the hands of his son on his reaching the age of one-and-twenty.”

“And those papers?”

“Are in the casket, too! Alicia, you see at last the tangled web your folly left me to unravel.”

“Like Penelope,” replied his wife, “I will undo the work of my own hands. I understand all that you have told me—clearly, distinctly understand it—perhaps, even more. Beckford, you say, can betray?”

“Unless he is bribed.”

“Gold shall not be wanting,” said her ladyship. “Think you he might be trusted?”

“Upon the same conditions.”

what preparations have you made for your defence?”

“Good. I comprehend. And now, Barnard,

“None,” was the gloomy answer.

“I, then, have been more thoughtful. Before leaving Moultree, I sent a sure agent to Exeter for your lawyer. He will be here by daybreak.”

A whispered conversation followed, in which the prisoner informed the strong-minded woman of every circumstance connected with the death of Hugh and Miles Goring, as well as the abduction of William.

“And you have concealed nothing from me?” she said, when he concluded.

“Nothing.”

“Then I answer for the result!” exclaimed her ladyship. “The murder of the boy, followed so closely by the decease of Lydia, must awaken public sympathy in your favor. After all, you have nothing—positively nothing—to fear.”

“You forget the locksmith,” replied Sir Barnard, gloomily.

“On the contrary, he will not be one instant absent from my thoughts till past fearing,” answered his wife. “And now, Barnard, I must quit you; my brain is teeming with projects, which I feel impatient to execute. Farewell! if my absence takes a wife from you,” she added, “it leaves a friend with you—Hope!”

With these words the clever, ambitious woman disappeared, and the baronet was once more left to his own thoughts and the watchful guardianship of the Bow-street officers, who made their re-appearance in his chamber.

Although during the day their charge appeared more calm, and retired early to rest, his slumbers were fearfully agitated, and a little after midnight he had a second fit equally violent with the first.

The following morning an order arrived to the two men to bring the prisoner before the bench of magistrates at mid-day.

“We will not tell him till the last moment,” observed the senior officer.

His companion nodded assent.

When informed that it was time to depart for Wicksal, a nervous agitation seized the baronet, and he asked if many persons were collected in the park.

“Only a few,” answered the senior officer.

“And the constables will keep them off,” added his colleague. “You need be under no fear of violence whilst under our charge—we will protect you.”

At this assurance a bitter smile passed over the features of Sir Barnard Gaston. “Protection! he to require protection from the common herd!”

Had such really been the case, it could scarcely have been wondered at, for the most horrible and exciting stories were circulated, not only in the little town itself, but the neighboring villages, of the atrocities committed at West Lodge.

“We must be there by twelve,” urged one of the men, who saw the reluctance of the prisoner to depart. “The order is most precise.”

“And it won't look respectful to keep the bench waiting,” observed his companion.

“This is folly,” murmured the unhappy man to himself; “they must dismiss the charge. Skillet was seen to fire the shot. As for the boy——Never!” he mentally ejaculated, after a few instants' reflection; “come what may, I never will acknowledge him!”

“We should be sorry to use unpleasant means with a gentleman like you,” said the officer, his patience worn out at last, “but we must do our duty.”

“I am ready to attend you,” replied the baronet, firmly.

One of the men preceded, the other followed the prisoner, who looked around him with a peculiar expression as they passed through the great hall.

“A curse go with you!” exclaimed the widow of Miles Goring, who had been watching all the morning to see him; “the curse of the being whom you have bereaved, and the dead you tempted to sin and wickedness.”

“Silence, woman!” exclaimed the officers, authoritatively.

“Haste on!—on!” murmured their prisoner

A chaise had been waiting at the principal entrance of the Lodge for the last hour, where the Wicksal constables, Hollis and King, were using their best exertions to keep the crowd back.

“Here he comes!” cried several as soon as the door opened.

“That's he!”

The speaker was mistaken. It was the senior Bow-street officer.

When Sir Barnard made his appearance, following closely after him, there was something very like a murmur of satisfaction from the crowd. He regarded them indignatly, and tried to frown.

“Look as black as yer like,” cried one of the rustics; “yer can't frighten us by yer looks now.”

“No, nor justice neither,” exclaimed a second.

“This way, Sir Barnard,” whispered the foremost officer. “Pay no attention to them.”

The prisoner had scarcely made one step in advance when a deep groan escaped him, and he fell back in the arms of the officer who was following him.

At first, those who had been in charge were disposed to think it an attempt to gain time, but the deadly pallor of his features undeceived them. Raising him in their arms, they carried him back into the house, and placed him in the very chair in which his grandson had expired.

Both the men called loudly for water; but before it could be brought the baronet was a corpse; his evil passions had distroyed him.

“I don't know what to make of it,” observed the senior officer. “Do you think it's a natural death?”

“That a jury must decide,” replied his comrade. “Our duty is plain—one of us must remain here whilst the other proceeds to Wicksal to inform the magistrates of what has taken place.

“It's a queer business altogether,” he added.

In which observation his companion perfectly agreed with him.

Great was the surprise of the bench when, instead of the prisoner, the Bow-street officer appeared before them to announce his death, and Trevanion was at once dispatched to West Lodge. So intense was the excitement, that the chairman did not dissolve the meeting till after his return.

“Well,” demanded Squire Beachum, “what is your report?”

“Apoplexy,” replied the doctor. “the proofs are unmistakable.”

“Thank Heaven,” murmured the venerable man, “one crime less has been spared him.”

The sudden death of Sir Barnard released the magistrates from a most painful inquiry; for, although firmly resolved, no doubt, to do their duty, there were several who would not have seen, without regret, the representative of the most ancient family in the county brought to the bar before them.

The prejudice of caste is strong enough at the present day. Our readers, therefore, can easily imagine what it must have been between thirty and forty years ago.

With this unexpected *dénouement*, popular feeling capriciously turned, and a deep sympathy was generally expressed for the family so terribly bereaved of its head, the youthful heir, and his widowed mother.

“It was all the master of the workhouse's fault,” was the general cry of the inhabitants. True or not, the opinion gained ground, and, had Humphrey Skillet been confined in any building less secure than the gaol, the probabilities are that the mob would have anticipated the slow but sure hand of justice.

There is an advantage, sometimes, in being in a prison.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

* * *

PEDANTRY crams our heads with learned lumber, and takes out our brains to make for it.

IDYL.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

Come up to my palace among the hills,
 For a stately house is mine—
Come up, and drown your mortal ills
 In the blood of my royal wine!
Come sit at my antique jasper doors
 While the crimson ebb and flow
Of the sunset lights from the cloudland shores
 Redden the world below!

I, in my palace of pearl and fire,
 Look out thro' my twilight bars,
My lofty, turreted walls aspire
 To kiss the feet of the stars!
Down in my meadows the lilies spring,
 Safe from the winter's reach—
And a sea with a silver murmuring
 Breaks on a silver beach!

When the morning sings with the golden spheres,
 I open my windows wide,
And a thousand plumes, and a thousand spears
 Bend to my regal pride.
Come up from the vales of Obscurity
 To these beautiful hights of mine,
Oh, come, my poet, and drink with me
 The blood of immortal wine!

Come up to my summer place, oh sweet,
 From thy dreary winter clime,
And the wind in the roses at our feet
 Shall sing thee a lovely rhyme—
A lovely rhyme of a far-away land,
 Where the meadows are ever in bloom,
Where never can come the folded hands,
 The silence, nor the tomb.

◆

A CURIOUS INCIDENT.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

A friend of ours, who recently travelled through the northern portion of Missouri, was highly entertained one evening with the narration of a Virginia backwoodsman, who had settled in that section when all around was a wilderness, and as this story of the old farmer, concerning the manner in which he became acquainted with his present wife, contains a rather curious and singular adventure, we have written it out, under the assurance that it was a real occurrence which has never been in print.

Joseph Tompkins—for so we will call the farmer—was a true specimen of a frontiersman—tall, lank and muscular, and much better acquainted with the mysteries of the woods than the refinement of books; and he had married a wife nearly as tall as himself, but who had the additional qualification of weighing some two hundred and fifty pounds, and whom Mr. Tompkins often playfully designated as "that thar tiny leetle woman."

"She's a prize, that thar same leetle woman is!" proudly replied the good farmer to a compliment which our friend paid to her domestic qualities · "and if you'd like to hear a bit of romance, I'll tell you how I fust got acquainted with her."

Of course the story was demanded, and the worthy farmer, settling himself well back in a bearskin-covered arm-chair, proceeded with his narration in the following characteristic language:

"When I fust moved to this here country from old Vargin'a, I reckon it was as wild a looking place as you ever seen. We come right here where we now live, and settled down right in the heart of the woods, that war powerful gloomy jest then, as you can fancy.

"Thar was dad himself and four of us boys, making a purty strong team; and going right to work, we soon had up a right smart chance of a cabin; and what time arter that that we warn't hunting for something to eat, we war claring off a patch of ground to put corn into the next coming spring.

"All that wide prairie that you've seen stretching away thar to the right, and now dotted over with fine houses, was as wild then as the big prairies towards the Rocky Mountains, and the tall, dry grass made it look awful dreary, as the fall winds began to whistle over it.

"Arter the weather begun to git purty cold, and we found our provisions gitting low, we concluded we'd better take a week to lay in game, to be in readiness for needing times; and so one day we got together some neighbors' boys, that lived about eight or ten miles off—us four and them making ten in all—and sot off on a reg'lar hunting expedition: and a wilder, merrier set of young rascals you couldn't skeer up the whole 'arth over, no sir-ee!

"Well, we tuk right acrost that thar prairie, intending to go to a wood on t'other side, whar thar was a famous salt-lick; but we hadn't gone more'n two mile, when we seen the awfullest big herd of bufflers that ever showed thar shaggy heads in these diggings. They war the fust that some of us had ever seen in our lives—me and my three brothers 'specially—and if we warn't nearly tickled outen our moccasins at the chance we'd now have to try our skill on the critters, then you can stop off my tobacker for a month—yes sir-ee!

"Well, you'd better believe thar warn't much fooling about then. The bufflers were slowly feeding along towards the fur side of the prairie, and we at once sot off to try our hands on 'em, taking pains to keep well down in the long grass, so's they shouldn't see us, and now and then gitting a chance to kiver ourselves for a while in the low, scrubby timber and hazle-nut bushes that growed thick along the different sloughs.

"I reckon the old brutes must a got the scent of us once in a while, though, for several times we seen 'em sniff the air, and then start off at a sort of trot, which they'd keep up for a mile or two, and then feed along slow agin, till we'd a'most come up to 'em, and then up and trot off agin.

"In this way we follered them up purty nigh the whole blessed day, without gitting a derned shot, and by that time I'd got about as mad as any human ever should git without nothing to bite, and I up and swor I wouldn't go back without one of them thar bufflers, if I had to stay a week for't, and all the other boys j'ined in, and swore the same thing. Then we took a snack from our wallets, and follered on, eating as we went, and mumbling out vengeance with every mouthful we put in.

"But still the same confounded luck! The more we pushed on, the more the bufflers pushed off, till at last down went the sun, and I felt like breaking something.

"'Who's a-going to gin in now?' says I.

"'Not me,' says one feller arter another till every feller had said it.

"'Well, thar's a cl'ar moon for us,' says I, p'inting towards the east, where she was jest coming up beautiful; 'and if them critters don't give us a chance to shoot some of 'em, I'll be hanged if they shall sleep a wink this blessed night.'

"So we pushed on, and in less than a half hour arter that we got right near the long black line of beasts. Whether it was bekase night had come on, or bekase we'd now got the breeze blowing towards us, I don't know; but anyhow the bufflers appeared to have got over thar skeer, and war now taking their ease, picking out the green sprigs of grass clost down to the ground.

"Well, we crept along up till we'd got within good, easy shooting distance, and then I told the boys we'd all git ready and fire together, and fotch as many's we could, and it war jest as like as not we wouldn't be able to git the second shot. The moon by this time was shining so c'lar and bright that we could see a'most as well as day; and then it was, jest about the time we war gitting ready to take aim, we did see something so curious that we stopped to look at it, and wonder over it, and, as I'm telling facts, I'll be frank enough to own up, gitting a leetle bit skeered at it too.

"The bufflers, as I've said, were stretched away in a long black line—some of 'em purty near us and some of 'em a good ways off—when suddenly one of them nearest us, and one of the old fellers we'd laid out to throw with our first shot, gin a loud, awful beller, like he'd got a pain in his stomach, and begun to caper round like I did onct when I got stung by a hornet. Now that warn't so very much in itself, for it mought be something had bit him; but when he broke away towards us, bellering all the time, and then stopped sudden and begun to paw the 'arth, and then stopped that and 'peared to be bracing himself on his legs, putting 'em as wide apart as he could, and then purty soon rolled over with a powerful groan—it sort of looked a bit queer. And then when three or four others went to doing the same thing, and all ending in the same way, it really looked a dern sight queerer.

"'Hello! what's the matter thar?' says one.

"'The old Scratch or a Injun, I don't know which!' says another.

"'Don't you see that buffler calf, that looks like it mought be a yearling, dodging about alongside of them fellers as gits the pain?' says a third.

"We all allowed we had seen it—but what then?

"'Well, that's the critter as kicks up all the rumpus,' says him that p'inted it out · 'and it's eyther a Injun, a sperret, or the devil—for if thar's any buffler in't you can hang me!'

"We boys all had our superstitious beliefs, as well as the old folks; and as we looked at that thar calf, flying round 'mongst them as 'peared to be wounded, we begun to feel as if we'd like to be a leetle bit furder off.

"'Let's shoot at it!' says one, and three or four rifles war immediately p'inted in that direction.

"'Don't!' says I: 'for if it's a Injun, he's only making meat, and we'll divide the sp'iles; and if it's a sperret, or the old one, you'll only waste your powder. Let's wait a bit and see what comes on't!'

"Well, arter the 'tother bufflers had gone through all the motions of the fust, and keeled over in the grass, we seen the thing, whatever it mought be, leave the herd and come quietly towards whar we war.

"'Down in the grass, boys, says I, and keep powerful still, till we git that thar critter in amongst us, and then it's like we'll git at the mystery!'

"So we all popped down and waited quietly for the spook to come up; and as I war one of the nearest to it, I felt my hair kind 'o bristle up, and I hurried over a prayer or two into my own mind jest to be ready for the wo'st.

"At fust, arter I'd dropped down, I couldn't see it at all; but I hadn't laid thar long, when I seen it's shaggy head, with it's short horns bobbing up and down, as it come right on towards the spot whar I war. I was skeered then, I won't deny, bekase I thought it mought be some wild prairie sperret; and if I'd been alone, thar aint a doubt in my mind that I'd done some purty tall walking right off.

"Well, I waited, holding my breath and trembling, till the awful thing come up closer and closer, and I somehow thought I could see the devil in the shape of a young buffler; and then feeling like a man does when he's cornered up to desperation, I jumped up with a yell right in front of it. As I done so, some of the other boys jumped up with a yell too; and then with a scream that made my blood curdle, the thing dropped right down in the high grass before me, and I thought it had gone into the 'arth straight. The next breath, though, I seen it a floundering; and p'inting down my rifle, I was jest about to fire, when a woman's voice said:

"'You've skeered me a'most to death, and I'm bound to box the ears of the man that's done it.'

"And with them words up jumps a woman, leaving the buffler's hide on the ground; and afore I knowed what was what, I felt my ears sing like you've heerd a tea-kettle afore now.

"If I was afeared when expecting to find it a sperret, I war dreadful astonished to find it a woman, and so war all the boys, who begun to gather round, hanging thar heads, as like they'd been cotched in some mean trick.

"'See here,' says I, catching hold of her to make sure she was human arter all, 'if you aint a hoss of a gal, then I never seen one that was—no, marm! Jest tell me whar you come from, and how you've done the purty trick we've jest seen? Dern me, if you don't beat all the snakes in these parts! Yes, marm!'

"She laughed right out wild, and called me a skeered goose—which warn't true, bekase I warn't skeered then, nor a goose nyther—and then she says, p'inting over the prairie to a hut that we could jest see as a black speck, says she:

"'I come from thar. Me and my mother lives thar by ourselves. My father's dead, and my only brother's gone to hunt his fortin. I have to kill all the game we live on, and I'm gitting purty used to it now, though it gives me a heap of trouble sometimes. I seen them bufflers feeding along this evening; and knowing as how we're nigh out of meat, I detarmined to run all risks and stretch a couple of 'em anyhow; and so taking the hide of one that I'd got fixed for the purpose, I crept in amongst 'em, and made good use of this here long knife, in the way I'd been showed how by a Injun. I've killed five to-night; and I was jest going home to git our hosses to drag 'em off, so's me and mother mought smoke, dry, or salt 'em down agin a wet day, when I run agin you, and got a awful skeer from a yell more like Beelzebub nor anything human.'

"'And for which I've got a pair of awful boxed ears,' says I.

"'And so you should have, you goose!" says she, repeating that term of endearment twice-times.

"Well, my friend, the upshot on't was, that we boys all helped that gal home with her meat, and helped her eat some on't too, whilst we hunted about thar with purty good luck. She war a screamer, and I war a allergator, and so in course we tuk to each other amazing. I liked her for her spunk, and she liked me for my beauty, and so in the end we got a travelling preacher to jine us according to law; and here we is, as happy as two clams.

"Thar, I've told you how I fust seen that tiny leetle woman, who can knock the hind sights off of ary thing in these diggings in the way of corn fixings, and I hope and pray that the day may be a long ways off afore Joe Tompkins sees the last of her. Yes, *sir!*"

◆

Prudence, through the ground of misery, cuts a river of patience, where the mind swims in boats of tranquillity along the stream of life, until she arrives at the haven of death, where all streams meet.

◆

A wife's bosom should be the tomb of her husband's failings, and his character far more valuable in her estimation than his life.

IS THERE SOUND WHERE THERE ARE NO EARS?—LETTER FROM ANOTHER SCIENTIFIC MAN.

When in our "correspondence department" we first published the question, "If there were no ears, would there be any sound?" we had no idea what a controversy it was destined to stir up. The question seemed a very simple one, until some of our great philosophers dipped into the discussion; but they have imparted to it a magnitude and mystery quite bewildering to ordinary minds. We are beginning to entertain the private opinion that the question is "too much" even for the philosophers, and that it really has no bottom. But the interest in it is increasing so rapidly, that we don't know but the upshot of the matter will be a convention of all the scientific men in the country to "sit on the question," and see what may come of their incubations. Meanwhile, the following letter from a distinguished correspondent, may serve to deepen the interest and mystery which surround the subject:

New Orleans, La., *December* 19*th*, 1860.

Mr. Bonner:—*New York Ledger*.—Will you permit L. H. E. a few remarks in the "acoustic controversy?" Several years ago, while pursuing his physiological studies in the University of Edinburgh, the professor brought before the notice of his pupils three individuals, a young lady and two young gentlemen, neither of whom had been by nature provided with outward ears; the helix, anti-helix, concha, meatus, membrana tympani had all been displaced by an impervious, hard, thick, bony substance, into which no eye could pierce, no sound could enter; and yet each of those persons could acutely hear whatever sounds surrounded them, especially when such sounds impinged upon their covered knee and other joints. These he (Allen Thompson) said were instances of what philosophers, for want of a better name, had called "illustrations of the sixth sense," a faculty differing from either of the other five senses. My explanation of this so-called sixth sense is widely different; for instead of its being a faculty differing altogether from the five physical senses, it differs only in being spiritual, and is merely a duplicate and a manifestation of one of the five senses inherent in and eternally belonging to our spiritual bodies. It might, however be called the sixth sense, or the first of the spiritual senses, to which I beg to add the remaining four· seeing, tasting, smelling, feeling. We might then speak of the ten senses: five spiritual, which are seldom evinced, and least of all understood, because so obscure; and five physical, which are universal and patent to all, except when from natural defects and abnormal conditions the physical apparatus of one or more of the five physical are rendered nugatory, and the spiritual sensibly and effectually aiding; then we commence to fumble amid irrelevant labyrinthian mysteries, and become satisfied with words signifying nothing, and vocal sounds instead of sterling facts. Hence the clog to all further inquiry in these as most all other subjects. This acoustic controversy brings up the whole question of all the other senses. I can adduce proofs of persons who can see without the use of their eyes; taste without the use of their tongue; feel sensations in the fingers or toes of their amputated limbs; and smelling I some day expect to find independent of the olfactory nerves, or the nose. Now, what is odor, what is touch, or taste, or sight, or sound? Do they necessarily and entirely depend upon the various nerves and apparatuses of sensation? Most certainly not; for these faculties would exist, and make themselves evident to our spiritual senses, (as they sometimes now do, when nature fails to complete our homal structures· or, as in monsters, adds too much to parts,) if *the usual apparatus of the senses were all demolished and anatomically destroyed.* But of the positive, undeniable nature of sound, who shall bring it upon the table of scientific experiment, and demonstrate whether it be born of opposing or combining elements, representing a *tertium quid* similar or differing from the nature of its producers, or whether it be an inert elemental principle, like "luminiferous ether," pervading all space, but requiring to be kicked into being by lightning, or a bugle before it can proclaim its existence, or its existence be known. Those who heard the morning stars sing together for joy, and were made sensible of the harmonic language of the spheres, might enlighten us; but how totally ignorant we find ourselves whenever we approach the *ultimate* of the so-called simplest thing! We ask what is water? A combination of oxygen and hydrogen. What are oxygen and hydrogen? Gaseous bodies. What are these bodies? Atoms. What are these atoms and their ultimate properties, attributes, final characteristics, and sum total of existence? Now I am cornered. But I will endeavor to answer, even should you ridicule the idea. They are nucleated existences of the divine energy in dissimilar proportions, which are the inverse of their atomic weights. This answer may be wide of the mark, and altogether unsatisfactory; it, nevertheless, brings us nearer to our Benevolent Creator, and assures us of His omnipresence.

Respectfully, L. H. E.

◆

MRS. SMITH'S DILEMMA;

OR,

PLAGUES THAT WE CANNOT DO WITHOUT.

It is undoubtedly a delightful thing to be the mother of loving, pretty daughters; but if they *could* be persuaded to confine their affection to yourself instead of spreading it over all your personal effects, it would be an improvement. Mr. Smith says, oracularly: My dear, see that the children are furnished with all they need for their own use, and then they won't meddle with what belongs to you. This is like the usual profundity of male remarks on female subjects. *Haven't I done it?* Haven't I given those girls boots enough to stock a shop, in the vain hope that I might indulge what seems to me not an unreasonable fancy, of being the *sole* possessor of mine, and notwithstanding, when I desire to take a walk, are not the particular pair I want already gone out airing, quite independent of my matronly feet. Don't I daily gnaw off my thread, and finger-nails, for want of scissors; and are not my envelopes—note-paper—cologne—seal-ring—postage stamps—and every other moveable—always gone when I want them. Why—I tearfully ask—is it, that buy what duplicates you will for these grabsters, nothing is ever so good as "mother's things?" When I pour these sorrows into *Mr.* Smith's tobacco-scented bosom, he oracularly ejaculates: Hide 'em, my dear—hide 'em, where they can't find 'em. That's all very well, but it is just there that the agony comes in, of not being able to remember *yourself* where you put them. Then I've tried looking dignified, and talking big about it; but what's the use when I've frolicked with them till their prevailing style of salutation to me is, now let *us girls* do this or that, or go here, or there, to-night. It's no use. I tell you Samson was not more powerless in the hands of Delilah. They pretend to say, these torments, that they make the house bright; they talk about how "*some folks* will find out their value when they get married;" they taunt us with decorating their room with lovely flowers on the occasion of their return after a short visit, and hugging and kissing them as if they had been gone a year instead of a week. They remind us of hot breakfasts, carefully provided when they lazily lay in bed after a late frolic the night before, and commiserating cups of tea for sundry headaches; and stacks of story-books to beguile rainy days, and birth-day presents, and all such little parental weaknesses, which of course we are heartily ashamed of, and, if they keep on appropriating our things, such as we never mean to be guilty of again, at least not——if we can help it! FANNY FERN.

◆

FOR PARENTS.—HOW TO RUIN A SON.

Let him have his own way—allow him free use of money—suffer him to rove where he pleases on the Sabbath-day—give him free access to wicked companions—call him to no account for his evenings—furnish him with no stated employment. Pursue any one of these ways, and you will experience a most marvellous deliverance, if you have not to mourn over a debased and ruined child. Thousands have realized the sad result, and have gone mourning to their graves.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Constant Reader says that "a circle of friends" are divided in opinion on the following question: "If a gentleman goes out with a party of ladies, *the ladies asking him to accompany them*, should he pay their fare in the cars, and would it be proper for the ladies to offer him the money?" It would be *quite* proper for the ladies to offer the money, and it would be the *truer* politeness, *if they did so*, for him to accept it; because, on all such occasions it is supposed that the gentleman's first wish is to do what will be most agreeable to the ladies whom he escorts. And in such a case, where ladies had requested the company of a gentleman, it might be very disagreeable to them to have him pay their fare, as it would expose them to the suspicion that that was what they had taken him along for. This is our theory on the subject, and we believe it to be a sound one; and yet it is quite probable that we should find ourselves unable to carry it out in practice, but should spontaneously "pay the fare," as we suspect any gentleman would, under such circumstances. In many cases like this, it is really a most embarrassing thing to attempt to decide what course would be the most proper one, and, as a general thing, the more a person *thinks* and *reasons* about it, the greater will be his embarrassment. Goethe says, in treating of great things, "The *spirit* in which we act is the highest matter;" and we think the same principle will apply to all things, small as well as great. It certainly applies to matters of etiquette. If the spirit—the feelings—the *intent* be right, the action will leave an agreeable impression whether it be in strict accordance with logical rules or not; whereas, an act performed with the most formal and exact etiquette, may be highly disagreeable, because the *spirit* in which it is done is not genial and gentlemanly. In all embarrassing cases, such as the one propounded by our correspondent, it is better, therefore, to be guided by a kind and gentlemanly heart than by a polite head.

C. M.—According to your statement of the case, it would be useless for you to go to law with your opponent. Having entered into and executed a contract, under seal, you are bound by it, no matter how much was left out of it which you *intended* to put in; unless you can show that your adversary *perpetrated fraud* in order to get you to sign and seal a contract such as you had no intention of executing. You make no allegation of fraud, however, and put the whole matter on the ground of your own neglect and of your indiscreet confidence in the party with whom you contracted. For *this* you have no remedy: and the only remuneration you can hope to obtain for the loss you may be subjected to, will be in the experience you have gained, and the thought that owing to your eyes having been so rudely opened, nobody will ever catch you napping again.

E. A.—Almost every young man would like to travel in Europe, and almost every young man experiences the same obstacle to the gratification of his desire that stands in your way, namely—want of money. You might just as well write to us thus: "I am a young man, just twenty years of age, and feel a very particular desire to own a house. Unfortunately, however, I do not possess the means of buying one. Can you put me up to any way of buying a house without money?" We cannot. With regard to your going as a reporter for a newspaper, we may just say, that when events shall be transpiring in Europe of sufficient importance to warrant the sending out of special correspondents, the individuals selected for that purpose will be practised hands, not young gentlemen afflicted with a desire to see Europe without paying for it.

T. C.—This correspondent thinks it possible for us to get a knowledge of the moon without the aid of a telescope. He proposes to take a daguerreotype of the moon, and then to take a magnified copy of the picture in the ordinary manner, and, afterwards, a magnified copy of the copy; and so on, until a picture of the moon is produced large enough to reveal the objects on its surface. He says, that when a magnified copy of a portrait is taken, wrinkles and pimples become visible which in the small picture could not be seen. Why, then, can we not, by a succession of magnified copies of the moon, render its mountains, valleys, and oceans visible? Why, indeed. Let our correspondent try the experiment, and let us know the result.

Bardstown.—This correspondent says: "I have a newly married gentleman friend, who before his marriage was engaged to a lady residing at a distance. This latter lady is ignorant of his marriage, and he still continues corresponding with her in the same style he did *before* his marriage. Is this honorable, either as it regards his wife or the other lady?" There can be but one opinion as to the reprehensibleness of such conduct as you say your friend is guilty of; and you should make it the ground of a rupture in your acquaintance with him. If he practises such despicable deception on two women who have trusted him, he is not capable of an honorable friendship either with man or woman.

Bernard.—Suppose the lady to whom a young man is engaged changes her mind, and tells him that although she has *tried*, she cannot love him, and begs him not to hate her for telling him so, should he speak to her if he afterward met her in company? Your question shows that you are not yet fitted to be a husband. Why should you neglect to "speak" to a woman who so nobly told you a truth, and appealed to the magnanimity which she *supposed* you to possess, for forgiveness. No *gentleman* ever refuses to "speak" to a lady because she could not conscientiously accept his offer of marriage.

M. M. M.—The letter of this correspondent shows that the strange creature, which ladies sometimes call "a brute of a husband," is not yet extinct in the United States. The brute referred to not only refuses to permit his wife's pastor to enter his house, but threatens to bring a suit against that pastor for baptizing his wife and admitting her into the church. The tyrant has also issued his mandate that his wife shall never go to church. In old times they used to duck scolding wives; such a husband as the one described by M. M. M. would not be the worse for a little cold water.

Accomack.—Major André was born in England, but his father was a native of Switzerland, and carried on business as a merchant at Geneva. The lady to whom Major André was so tenderly attached was named Honoria Sneyd, she afterwards married Mr. Edgeworth. The bones of Major André were disinterred in 1821, taken to England, and buried in Westminster Abbey, where a small monument was erected to his memory. The name is pronounced An-dray, and must be written with an accent over the final letter, thus, André.

G. P.—When a gentleman accompanies a lady on a visit to the house of a friend, should the lady or the gentleman make the first move to go home? It is supposed that when a gentleman waits upon a lady anywhere, it is his intention to give *her* pleasure; therefore, it is always for *her* to express her wishes, and for him to yield to them in all gallantry. If he is churlish and determined to have his own way, it would be better for him to go alone.

L. L.—If you leave your children with their grandmother, and look to her to take care of them in your absence, you must of course delegate to her sufficient authority over them to enable her to keep them in proper subjection. It is an eternal principle of government and business, and it holds good in domestic affairs as well as elsewhere, that *authority* must be proportioned to *responsibility.*

J. C. W.—The eldest son of the Marquis de Lafayette was named George Washington Lafayette. He was an infant during the Revolutionary war, but, in his early youth when his father was overwhelmed by the French revolution, he came to the United States and was entertained by Gen. Washington. He also accompanied the Marquis on his triumphal return to America in 1824. He died at Lagrange in France, Jan. 6th 1856.

M. M.—It is not polite for ladies, when visiting their friends, to walk in without ringing, or announcing their presence to the lady of the house. We should not approve of such a practice, even among neighbors and intimate friends. But if they do not know any better, you can always have the outer door so secured as to render ringing necessary.

B. R. wants to know if it is proper for a gentleman, upon meeting the glance of a lady at a public table, to recognize her the parties being two or three tables apart, and knowing each other but slightly. That depends on *how* "slightly" they are acquainted. If an introduction has taken place, we should say yes, otherwise, no.

J. B. wants to know what he is to infer because a particular lady friend of his does not accompany him to the hall door when he leaves, after spending the evening with her Probably, that she has no fancy for draughts or rheumatism, and thinks it best that you should finish your talking in a warm atmosphere.

F. E.—When a young man asks you to go to church with him, and then never calls for you, but goes by himself, and then afterwards invites you again, decline, decidedly, unless he *voluntarily* gives you a satisfactory explanation of such ungentlemanly behavior.

A. J.—If a gentleman gives the lady to whom he engaged himself a ring, she need not in return give him one. It is not the custom to do so, although there is no objection to it in such a case, if both parties desire it.

Mattie.—If a gentleman sends a lady a complimentary piece of poetry, should she write and thank him for it or not? That depends upon the degree of intimacy between the parties.

S. W. C.—This correspondent, who is a lady, and writes a most beautiful hand, has employed her gift of penmanship in inditing the following lines: "If a lady writes a piece of poetry, and sends it to a newspaper for publication, and the editor of said paper deems it not worthy of *publication*, should he not at least acknowledge the receipt of it?" To which we reply, Probably not. Such an event in the world of poetry, literature and newspaper publication would necessarily be governed by the circumstances of the case. If the editor to whom the "piece of poetry" should be sent had never before received such a creation of art or inspiration of genius, he might be held to the condition of sending the fair author word concerning its fate, as some sort of return for the novel sensation she had afforded him. But if he had for years been receiving "pieces of poetry," written on blue paper, on pink paper, on yellow paper, on white paper, on green paper, on straw-colored paper, on cream-colored paper, on gilt-edged paper, on satin paper, on foolscap paper, on yellow wrapping paper, on scraps of dirty paper, and written in black ink, and in blue ink, and in red ink, and with black lead pencils, and blue lead pencils, and red lead pencils—if every mail brought him scores of these "pieces of poetry," and other scores of still more voluminous pieces of prose—and if he kept a standing notice in his paper to the effect that he would not return rejected manuscripts, we think that the lady who should send him a "piece of poetry" ought not to expect him to take the slightest notice of it, or of her, unless he should determine to publish the "inspiration" in the columns of his paper. We will in all kindness say to our correspondent, and to other ladies, that the writer of a "piece of poetry," who sends it to an editor, is very apt to overrate the amount of attention which is due to her under such circumstances. The sending of a piece of poetry to an editor may be an epoch in a young lady's life, and a thing which, in her opinion, not only the editor but the world at large should take note of; but to the editor it is apt to be only one of innumerable "bores" to which his position subjects him from the myriads of unthinking scribblers, or perhaps we should say, "accomplished poetesses."

Baltimore.—The following narrative is submitted to our consideration by Baltimore: "There lives in a neighboring state, a family consisting of three persons, father mother, and a son aged 23. The son having an inclination to matrimony, which the father did not approve, staid out rather late, and the old man determined to put a stop to his doing so. Accordingly, he sat up one night himself to a late hour, lying low for the return of his son, stick in hand. The lover, entering the house slyly and silently, was suddenly attacked by the angry father with great violence. The young man caught the stick, and wresting it from the old man's grasp, proceeded to belabor him with all the vigor of youth and fury. After this performance, both sire and son went to bed. The next morning the irate father went to a magistrate and endeavoured to get a warrant for his son's arrest, but by the interposition of the mother was prevented from proceeding farther. The question is, was the young man in the right." No, sir. Both were in the wrong. The father's conduct was absurd and tyrannical in the highest degree, and he deserved all the punishment he received, and more. The son was right in taking away the stick, and in defending himself against the old man's ridiculous attack. But to strike his father after he had disarmed him was entirely unjustifiable. It was an impious action. No degree of provocation on the father's part could begin to justify it.

George.—This young gentleman, after having bought lottery tickets for three years without drawing a single prize, begins to doubt, not the wisdom of that proceeding, but whether the lottery offices are honorably conducted. He also desires to know whether the stars have anything to do with it, and whether it might not be a good idea to enlist the aid of an astrologer to guide him to the selection of the lucky numbers. George, we fear, you are a simpleton. Supposing your lottery to be fairly conducted, (which we do *not* suppose) the lucky numbers are so few and the blanks so extremely numerous, that if a man were fool enough to buy a ticket once a month for forty years, he would be almost certain not to draw prizes enough to make good the money spent in tickets. The lottery, George, is a relic of barbarism. It is a contrivance by which sharpers get rich upon the hard-earned money of such simple and greedy souls as you appear to be. If you want to be rich, use your wits, such as you have, and your hands, in some useful and honest calling, and stop trying to get something for nothing. As to the stars, George, they have something better to do than helping you to buy lottery tickets. Astrology and lotteries belong to the past. For a modern man to have anything to do with them proves that he is either very young, or very ignorant, or a rascal by profession.

F. S.—This correspondent, who describes himself as a hardworking young man, who has saved up a little capital, asks for our opinion of the following advertisement.

> **$300.**—TO ANY YOUNG MAN WITH A CASH CAPITAL of $300, an excellent chance is offered for engaging in a light, agreeable and lucrative business, whereby a handsome yearly profit can be made. Young men *who have no friends in the city* will find this a quick and pleasant means of securing an easy and paying business ready made to their hand. For further particulars, address, &c., &c.

We think, Mr. F. S., that the author of that advertisement is a swindler, and that if you should have anything to do with him, the "little capital" which you have "saved up" would soon be where you would never see "ary red" of it again. We have repeatedly warned our readers against these traps for "*young men who have no friends in the city*," and it is surprising to us that our cautions should require such frequent repetitions. Will men never learn that there *is not*, and *can not be*, any easy way to "a handsome yearly profit" from the very start, in any business whatever?

T. K.—Your teacher did *not* overstep the line of his duty, in telling you that you must not take the arm of a gentleman while attending school. You ask if taking his arm is a greater offence than walking with him. We answer that you should do *neither;* and while attending school you should conform to its rules; and when you become so rash and disobedient as to determine not to regard your teacher's admonitions and commands, you should leave the institution.

Student.—Petroleum is another name for naptha, and means, literally, rock-oil. This oil issues from the earth, and is found in several countries in Europe. Within the last few years, many springs of petroleum have been discovered in Pennsylvania, which have produced great quantities of this valuable oil. The city of Parma is said to be wholly lighted with Petroleum. It is sometimes used medicinally.

Cerberus.—It is our opinion that scolding never does children any good, but that, on the contrary, it does them harm. Scolding implies that the scolder is out of temper and whenever a person acts under the impulsion of ill-temper he is of course swayed from the straight and narrow path of wisdom and beneficence. Ill-natured words never do either man or boy, woman or girl, any good, either as speaker or hearer of them.

X. Y. Z. writes to us as follows: "I am in love with a young lady and I think that she returns my love. I wrote to her several times without receiving any reply, and on meeting me she said that her mother objects to her writing to gentlemen. What am I to think of such a girl?" You should think that so dutiful a daughter will make an excellent wife, and do your best to win her.

Clara.—To tell your story to the public would be improper, but this we can say: You did right to reject and detest the young man who was capable of making such a proposal to his intended bride. To take advantage of the fact that you were under his protection was doubly base, and his conduct proved that he had no real respect for your character.

Emma H.—If your lover has, as you say, discontinued his visits without an explanation, and without any offence having been given on *your* part, let him go. No honorable, right-hearted man would so treat a lady, you are better rid of him, by far.

Doubtful.—Is it proper for a young man to visit a lady every night, engaged or not engaged? If *engaged*, yes; if not engaged, no—unless he *wishes* to put on the golden fetters and intends soon to be clanking them at his fair captor's feet.

M. G.—Of course it is not proper to speak, without having had an introduction, to a gentleman whom you have met several times. Any lady who should do this, except in a *very extraordinary* case, would subject herself to suspicion and insult.

O. R.—If a gentleman takes out two sisters, and offers his arm to that one of them to whom he is engaged, and not to the other, she should quietly take it, if it is in the *evening*; if in the *daytime*, it would not be necessary for her to do so.

New-York.—A corvette is a sloop of war, of not more than twenty guns, and ranks next below a frigate. The word is French, and signifies a leap, and is akin to our English word, curvet.

W. J. R.—Of course it is your duty when you are in company with a gentleman friend who is quiet and reserved, and who is on friendly terms with you, to do your best to keep up the conversation.

Rosa.—If a lady invites a gentleman from the parlor into the library, she should enter first. In passing from one room to another, a gentleman always makes way for a lady.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next*